The *Chronographia* of George the Synkellos and Theophanes

The Ends of Time in Ninth-Century Constantinople

Jesse W. Torgerson

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Brill's Series on the Early Middle Ages

CONTINUATION OF THE TRANSFORMATION
OF THE ROMAN WORLD

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Cover illustration: Vatican City BAV Vat. gr. 1291 f. 47r. Epact table in the Vatican copy of the Handy Tables of Ptolemy. The diagram's outer ring indicates the epact for each year from the 30th year of the Diocletianic era (AD 314) to the 257th (AD 541), counted clockwise in concentric circles starting from the innermost ring. At the center is *Selene*, the moon, who uses her left hand to drive a chariot drawn by two bulls. The four surrounding medallions present personifications of night and day. Image courtesy of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

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Acknowledgements

First of all: Kelly Erin Torgerson. We did it. You read and discussed this project beyond what can be described by any standard phrase indicating helpfulness or support. Your love for me meant living with it as long as I have. Thank you, my lover. Second of all: Lucy, Mary, Edmund, and Wayne. You kept me sane and made life richer and more meaningful than I thought possible. Thank you, my joys. My parents and extended family, you have been unfailingly encouraging and supportive throughout. Thank you, my dears.

Though this parent takes full responsibility, *The Ends of Time* was raised by a village. The project is a complete re-writing of "Synchrony and Dissonance," the wild collection of hypotheses that was my 2013 dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley. It is right to both re-absolve the persons and re-thank the institutions involved in both the genesis and its end. Rosamond McKitterick and Peter Sarris were my supervisors for the year I spent as a visiting scholar at King's College, Cambridge University and during which this project was conceived. It is not possible to imagine more thoughtful, welcoming, and instructive hosts. Maria Mavroudi advised the original dissertation and has done more than I asked to help make the present book presentable. I will ever aspire to realize her lessons and advice. Susanna Elm, Geoff Koziol, Maureen Miller, and David H. Wright (rest in peace) at UC Berkeley were and are everything that a graduate student hopes for in teachers and mentors. This project was inspired by what I learned from each one of you. Thank you all for, above all, kindness and generosity.

Audiences and workshop attendees repeatedly made me rethink everything I had to say about the *Chronographia* to the extent that I had to stop giving talks while I finished the project. For their encouragement, feedback, and critiques I thank the relevant hosts and attendees of (in chronological order) the Cambridge University History Seminar, the Bay Area Italian History Reading Group, the California Medieval History Seminar at the Huntington Library, the *Chronicle* of Theophanes workshop at the Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance in Paris, the Center for Humanities at Wesleyan University, the Five Colleges Late Antique Seminar, the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, and the International Medieval Congress at Leeds.

Colleagues and friends read this book in whole or in part and each offered absolutely priceless feedback and help for nothing more than a sincerely-worded thank-you. In particular I remain truly appreciative of and indebted to Kate Bollinger, Joe Fitzpatrick, Marek Jankowiak, Katie Jasper, Ethan Kleinberg, Tyler Lange, Uli Plass, Jeff Rider, and Gary Shaw. An untold number of students

Finally, I thank Wesleyan University and the Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture for together realizing my goal of publishing this book as an open-access e-book.

They say that books are like children. If that metaphor can hold—I will not pretend to know what it means to give birth—then publishing a book is much like a child moving out to begin their adult life. Unlike any of my actual children, however, this book is not welcome to come back home. I can only hope it will behave well in the world. I am sure you will let me know if it does not. As the *Preface* of Theophanes has already put it, I can only beg the reader to forgive me my errors, and to come to my aid by completing what is missing.

Figures and Tables

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Abbreviations

ACO II	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Series Secunda
AD	*Anno Domini*, year of the Lord (Christian era)
AM	*Anno mundi*, year of the World
AOC	Archives de l'Orient chrétien
AT	William Adler and Paul Tuffin, trans. *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002
AUU SBU	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Byzantina Uppsaliensia
AUS SLS	Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BC	Before Christ (Christian era)
BBOM/S	Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs/Studies
BBA	Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten
BBS	Berliner Byzantinistische Studien
BBTT	Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations
BHG	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BYZARCH	Byzantinisches Archiv
BYZAUS	Byzantina Australiensia
BSLT	Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation
ca.	*circa*, about
ch.	chapter
CELAMA	Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages
CEMS	Central European Medieval Studies
CFHB	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis
CPG	*Clavis Patrum Graecorum*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSCO Syr III	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptores Syri Series Tertia
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
CSMLT IV	Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Fourth Series
dB	Karl de Boor, ed. *Theophanis Chronographia*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883
dB2	Karl de Boor, ed. *Theophanis Chronographia*. Vol. 2. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1885

DOS	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
DOMH	Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Humanities
f.(f.)	folio (s)
fl.	*floruit*, flourished
FMEMC	Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture
GIM	Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Musej
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
M	Alden A. Mosshammer, ed. *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia.* BSGRT. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1984
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi
MGH Epp	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epistolarum
MM	The Medieval Mediterranean
MS	Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997
MVB	Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik
NF	Neue Folge, new series
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
ODB	Alexander P. Kazhdan, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium.* 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991
OSB	Oxford Studies in Byzantium
PBE I	John R. Martindale, et al., eds. *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire* (641–867). Online edition. 2001 and 2015. http://www.pbe.kcl.ac.uk
PG 1710	*Parisinus graecus 1710* = Paris, BnF, *Grec* 1710
PG	Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca.* 161 vols. Paris, 1857–1866
PmbZ	Ralph-Johannes Lilie and Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002
PSPBS	Publications for the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
r.	*regnavit, reigned*
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SEMH	Studies in Early Medieval History
SLAEI	Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam
s.n.	*sine nomine*, without a name
s.v.	*sub verbo*, under the word
Syr	Scriptores Syri
TCH	Transformation of the Classical Heritage

TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
USML	Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy
VG 155	*Vaticanus graecus 155* = Vatican City, BAV, *Vat. gr.* 155

Two Notes on the Text

Names of people, places, and offices. I welcome the trend of transliterating Greek names rather than translating them into Latinized forms. At the same time I also value consistency, dialogue, and comparison, and this book was not only written for scholars familiar with the byzantine period of Roman history. As a camel facing the eye of the needle I have chosen to make my way by following the conventions of *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* as the standard English language reference work in the field. For this reason readers will find I refer to Constantine (rather than Konstantinos) and Irene (rather than Eirene) but Herakleios (rather than Heraclius) and Nikephoros (rather than Nicephorus). The one (intentional) exception to this rule is Eusebius (Eusebios in the *ODB*) of Caesarea, in deference to the convention of scholarship on that figure. I trust these offenses of inconsistency will be overcome by the benefits of being able to quickly look up the people, places, and offices to which the text refers.

Citations in original languages. I have not been consistent in when I chose to provide the original non-English text of quotations in either the footnotes or the text proper. So much of the argument of this book involves reference to specific passages in the *Chronographia* that if I had done so in every case it would have added substantial length to what is already a very long publication. I have opted for an idiosyncratic approach. I provided texts in their original languages where I deemed my colleagues would either desire to immediately consult that version, or where providing original terminology or phrases was an essential part of the argument (with apologies to my readers without either Greek or Latin). Where it is found that I have not provided the original language when readers find I really should have, I ask the reader to accept my apologies in advance. For readers generous enough to want to carefully follow along with all of the arguments here I strongly recommend reading this book with the critical editions and translations of the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos and the *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor at hand. The goal of this book is to produce new questions and facilitate new ideas by reading those magisterial publications in a new light.

Reading the *Chronographia* on Its Own Terms

In its era, the *Chronographia* project of George the *synkellos* (d. AD 810–813) and Theophanes known as "the Confessor" (d. AD 817–818) was a masterwork which redefined the genre of Greek historical literature. The jointly-authored chronography was written in Constantinople between ca. 808–815 as an account of the entire human history of the world, from the first moment of creation to the beginning of the reign of Leo V (r. 813–820). The work quickly came to stand above all other contemporary Byzantine historical texts: two-and-a-half centuries of subsequent medieval Greek historians and chronographers framed their narratives of the Roman Empire as either direct continuations or imitations of the *Chronographia*. Modern historians also acknowledge it as "the greatest achievement of Byzantine historical scholarship"[1] and as an "undertaking on a scale and of a precision never attempted in the history of Byzantine scholarship."[2] Nevertheless, there has been a catch in the work's modern reception. Scholars have also been deeply critical, judging the *Chronographia* to be a compilation without narrative unity, a mere dossier.[3]

This book locates the apparent contradiction between those assessments in the different forms in which, and the different ends for which, medievals and moderns read the *Chronographia*. Other studies have ultimately sought to use the *Chronographia* as a source on the historical events it describes. My study of the *Chronographia* reprioritizes the medieval Byzantine ends of the project in order to ask new historical questions of the work. I use the *Chronographia*'s unique account of events as a source on the era which produced and then re-edited it. In doing so I reveal how the *Chronographia* communicated meaning about the past within its own present, its own era. My focus is thus not on the work's origins and how it was written, but on its significance and how it was read. To this end, I set aside what has been the guiding purpose of scholarship on the *Chronographia*—to assess the veracity of its descriptions

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1 Cyril A. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?," *Zborknik Radova Vizantinoškog Instituta* 18 (1978): 17.

2 Ihor Ševčenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 279–93.

3 In Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), the project is "a boxful of loose papers" (lxii), "a file of the sources" (lxxiv and xci), "a dossier of extracts from earlier witnesses" (xcv), and "a scissors and paste job" (lv).

of events—in favor of reconstructing a historicized ninth-century reading of the text which I then use to tell us something new about the world of ninth-century Constantinople. My sources are the surviving ninth-century manuscripts of the work, in particular the format and the contents of the earliest surviving manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Grec* 1710.

In the study that follows, part 1 begins by proposing new terms on which to read the *Chronographia*. The first chapter describes and compares the different forms in which its manuscripts presented the text to ninth-century readers.[4] Subsequent chapters take the text's claims about its author, its overall argument, and how it proposed to guide the participation of readers as evidence for how the work would have been received in the ninth century.[5] Part 2 applies that analysis of the *Chronographia*'s self-fashioning to how the work told its story of the Roman and Christian era from its beginnings up to its own day. Part 3 concludes the study by accounting for how the *Chronographia* fit in to the struggle for the image of the emperor at two moments of crisis and political upheaval in early ninth-century Constantinople, in AD 808–810 and again in AD 814–815. The Conclusion returns to the production of the manuscript *PG 1710* in the middle of the ninth century to argue that the new stories woven into the fabric of that recension confirm the political stakes invested in the form and content of this tapestry of Roman history.

In this Introduction, the following section clarifies why apparently simple concepts such as authorship and text have proven so particularly complex and so inhibiting to readings of the *Chronographia* as a whole.[6] It offers an alternative, a proposal for moving forward from the surviving material evidence, for the manuscripts themselves offer us a way to set aside the questions of original authorship and original text and pursue the work of reading and

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4   This is not to suggest that this project stands in the place of a much-needed updated critical edition. See: Federico Montinaro, "Histories of Byzantium: Some Remarks on the Early Manuscripts of Theophanes' *Chronicle*," *Semitica et Classica* 8 (2015): 171–76.

5   Rather than assessing the degree to which the *Chronographia* adhered to the apparent generic conventions of ancient chronicles, as in Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Tradition from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD*, vol. 1, *A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), this study pursues the ways in which the *Chronographia* innovated, as in Jesse W. Torgerson, "Could Isidore's Chronicle Have Delighted Cicero? Using the Concept of Genre to Compare Ancient and Medieval Chronicles," *Medieval Worlds* 3 (2016): 65–82.

6   For one of the few approaches to the *Chronographia* as a work of literature, see Alexander P. Kazhdan, in collaboration with Christina Angelidi and Lee Francis Sherry, *A History of Byzantine Literature: (650–850)*, Research Series 2 (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 1999).

contextualizing the entire work. Re-reading the *Chronographia* on its own terms means foregrounding the *Chronographia*'s understudied claim to *auctoritas* to explain how and why this work which has so perplexed modern scholars was nevertheless attributed with such power and authority in its own age. The introduction concludes by establishing what we stand to gain from this new approach.

1   Reconstructing Authors or Re-Reading Manuscripts? A New Approach

The customary way to contextualize and historicize any monumental work is to account for its creation by describing its origins and its originator. The *Chronographia* project presents a particular difficulty on both fronts. The work's origins are to a great extent found elsewhere: most of its contents consist of edited compilations from earlier texts. And, its originator George the Synkellos is otherwise unknown and did not manage to finish his own work. The *Chronographia* was finished by a figure known as Theophanes and thus has not one originator but two. Further complicating the matter, we might know who this Theophanes is, but we might not. Since the mid-ninth century the Theophanes who finished the *Chronographia* has been identified with the Theophanes who was Abbot of Megas Agros and became known to posterity as "the Confessor."[7] Nevertheless, modern scholars have long harbored doubts as to the veracity of this identification.[8] Scholars of Byzantium have thus far proven unable to even come to a working consensus on how to acknowledge these ambiguities and yet still give a complete accounting of exactly when,

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[7]   It is possible to identify and study the monastery of *Megas Agros* over which Theophanes the Confessor was abbot. Cyril Mango and Ihor Ševčenko, "Some Churches and Monasteries on the Southern Shore of the Sea of Marmara," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 27 (1973): 235–77.

[8]   The most recent arguments against identifying the Theophanes who collaborated with George the Synkellos with Theophanes the Confessor can be found in: Panayotis A. Yannopoulos, *Théophane de Sigriani le confesseur (759–818): Un héros orthodoxe du second iconoclasme*, Collection Histoire 5 (Brussels: Éditions Safran, 2013) and Constantin Zuckerman, "Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler, or, A Story of Square Brackets," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015): 31–52. Zuckerman's proposal that to be honest with the surviving evidence we should speak about Theophanes "the Chronicler" should be followed. Zuckerman is surely right that while we *do* have a second author whom headings in the surviving manuscripts (*Wake Greek* 5 f. 61v) claim to be Theophanes, the "abbot of Agros" and whose tone is sometimes identifiable in the latter part of the *Chronographia*, nevertheless it is not necessary that this voice belongs to the historic Theophanes the Confessor.

how, and by whom the *Chronographia* came to be. In recognition of this ongoing debate, in the present study I can only responsibly refer to the second author of the *Chronographia* as "Theophanes."

The single most important factor for why the authorship question has so entangled scholars is a contradiction between the historical reality of the distinctively collaborative way in which the text was created, and the unbroken print tradition of publishing the *Chronographia* project in two parts, divided by author. As stated above, in its historical, medieval context the *Chronographia* project is a single work covering the entire past from the Creation to our AD 813. This single work was completed thanks to a productive collaboration between the two authors just mentioned. Scholars agree that George the Synkellos—whose lifespan is unknown but is held to have ended in AD 810 or before AD 813 at latest—began the project in AD 808 and gave it up in AD 810 in or near Constantinople.[9] Internal textual evidence indicates that George intended for his account to be brought up to his present day.[10] Nevertheless, in the two years he worked on the project George only managed to bring his account from the Creation up to AD 284 (the beginning of the reign of the emperor Diocletian).

According to a short prefatory epistle by Theophanes, George the Synkellos was unable to complete his *Chronographia* project because he was dying. In sentences that have generated a great deal of controversy, Theophanes recounted how George bequeathed him the obligation to complete the project.[11] The debate over the relationship between the two authors has focused on interpreting Theophanes' statement:

9   The argument for these dates was first articulated in: Richard Laqueur, "George Synkellos," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 4A (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1932), 1398. The argument has not been challenged since. For the most recent introduction and guide to scholarship on the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos see: Leonora Neville, "George Synkellos," in *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56–60.

10   "[These things] I shall describe to the best of my abilities up to the current year, the 6300th from the creation of the universe, the 1st year of the indiction." William Adler and Paul Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8. Διαγράφω κατὰ δύναμιν, ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἐνεστῶτος ͵ϛτ´ ἔτους ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ἰνδικτίωνος α´. Alden A. Mosshammer, ed., *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia*, BSGRT (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1984), 6.11–12. Hereafter citations of this text are given in the form AT page# / M page#, for example this passage AT 8 / M 6, referring respectively to the above standard translation and edition.

11   The ongoing debate is directly informed by Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?" For three recent opposing interpretations of George's bequeathal to Theophanes see: Warren T. Treadgold, "The Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 9–30; Andrzej Kompa, "Gnesioi Filoi: The Search for George Syncellus' and Theophanes the Confessor's Own

> Since … [George the Synkellos] was overtaken by the end of his life and
> was unable to bring his plan to completion…. when he left this earthly
> life and migrated unto the Lord (being in the Orthodox faith), he both
> bequeathed to me, who was his close friend, the book he had written and
> provided materials with a view to completing what was missing.[12]

I will address the specifics of these statements by Theophanes in the con-
text of his entire preface in chapter 4. For now, the most important effect of
Theophanes' self-introduction has been to divide the *Chronographia* project at
the place where this *Preface* appears in the manuscripts: between AD 284, the
point where George left off, and the part to which Theophanes contributed,
from there to the ending at AD 813.

That is, the ninth-century conceptual distinction between these two parts
of the *Chronographia* project has, in the modern era, been reified to the extent
that the one project is now split into two separate texts. In the modern era
George's and Theophanes' portions each stand as an independent book, called
by different titles. Since the seventeenth century George's *Chronography* has
been a stand-alone work with its own critical editions, modern translation,
and critical studies.[13] Similarly, scholars have also fully separated Theophanes'
Chronicle from the entire *Chronographia* project by also reproducing it as such,
with its own critical editions, translations, and critical studies under its own
title, *Chronicle*.[14] Nevertheless, the manuscripts make clear that the *Chronicle*
was never intended to function as an independent text. Our evidence from the

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Words, and the Authorship of Their Oeuvre," *Studia Ceranea* 5 (2015): 155–230; Zuckerman,
"Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler."

12   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 1; Karl de Boor, ed., *Theophanis
Chronographia*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883), 1:1. Hereafter citations of this text
are given in the form MS page# / DB page#, for example this passage MS 1 / DB 1, referring
respectively to the above standard translation and the first volume of the edition.

13   Jacob Goar, ed., *Georgii Monachi quondam Syncelli Chronographia ab Adamo usque ad
Diocletianum* (Paris: Typographia Regia, 1652); Wilhelm Dindorf, ed., *Georgius Syncellus
et Nicephorus Cp.*, CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1829); Mosshammer, *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga
Chronographia*. William Adler's monumental study on the Greek chronographic tradi-
tion ends with George's *Chronography* but not with the entire planned *Chronographia*
project: it neglects the work of George's collaborator Theophanes. William Adler, *Time
Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius
Africanus to George Syncellus*, DOS 26 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research
Library and Collection, 1989). W. Treadgold is unique in treating the entire *Chronographia*
project as a whole in his 2013 study: Warren T. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*
(Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

14   Johannes Classen, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2 vols., CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1839–1841); De
Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*; Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*;
Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*.

Middle Ages indicates that the portion of the work that George wrote independently did not circulate alone until recensions made centuries after it was first composed.[15] The modern history of the editing and publication of the *Chronographia* project has made the conceptual division between the work of George and the work of Theophanes to seem more substantial than it ever did in the Byzantine period itself.

At the same time scholars are, of course, not only well aware of the contradiction between the medieval transmission of the project and the modern publication of it, but have grappled with the extent to which George should be co-author or even full author of the portion attributed to Theophanes. There is no dispute that George wrote the first portion of the project (the so-called *Chronography*). George was and is universally attributed with the immense conceptual work that lies behind the entire *Chronographia*.[16] And, all scholars accept that George contributed to the so-called *Chronicle* to a much greater extent than the modern scholarly division of the *Chronographia* into two separate codices implies. This is due to a number of factors. The local knowledge of the area around Jerusalem revealed in the *Chronography* also makes George a much more likely compiler than Theophanes of the "Eastern Source" incorporated into the *Chronicle*.[17] And, since Theophanes is famously self-effacing in his *Preface* and since the surviving accounts of Theophanes "the Confessor's" life do not mention the *Chronographia* at all, there is doubt as to

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15   Jesse W. Torgerson, "From the Many, One? The Shared Manuscripts of the Chronicle of Theophanes and the Chronography of Synkellos," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 93–117.

16   Beginning with A. Mosshammer's visionary 1979 study on the Greek chronographic tradition, followed by a complementary article by G. Huxley in 1981, George the Synkellos has had a significant rehabilitation thanks to A. Mosshammer, W. Adler, and P. Tuffin among others. See: Alden A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1979); G. L. Huxley, "On the Erudition of George the Synkellos," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* 81C (1981): 207–17. And, besides Mosshammer's 1984 critical edition, and Adler and Tuffin's 2002 translation, (*The Chronography of George the Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation*), see: Alden A. Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, DOS 26 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989); and, Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium." These scholars do focus on the erudition behind the compilation, giving George his due not only for preserving knowledge that would otherwise be lost *but also* as a scholar in his own right.

17   These asides are discussed and analyzed in: Treadgold, "The Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus."

whether Theophanes is the author or his contemporaries even thought of him as the work's author.[18] Thus in counter-point to the fact that George's name does not appear on any title page of any publication of, or on, the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, scholars insist that at the very least George must be considered an influence upon the rest of the text, the so-called *Chronicle* of Theophanes.[19] Some version of George the Synkellos' case for "authorship" of the *Chronicle* is in theory accepted by nearly all. At the same time, the joint *Chronographia* project of George and Theophanes is not studied as such, but as the *Chronology* of George and the *Chronicle* of Theophanes.[20]

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18   A hagiography and an encomium provide us with two contemporary accounts of Theophanes the Confessor though neither of them mentions the *Chronicle*. Basilius Latyšev, "Methodii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani: Vita S. Theophanis Confessoris e Codice Mosquensi n. 159," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie. Ser. 8: Classe Historico-Philologique* 13, no. 4 (1918): 1–40; Stéphane Efthymiadis, "Le Panégyrique de S. Théophane le Confesseur par S. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b): Édition critique du texte intégral," *Analecta Bollandiana* 111, no. 3–4 (1993): 259–90.

19   This debate has generated many articles, but the more scholarship addresses itself to the *Chronographia*, the more the question of authorship has seemed to inhibit interpretations. For a coherent progression see: Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?"; Huxley, "On the Erudition of George the Synkellos"; Cyril A. Mango, "The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12–13 (1988–1989): 360–72; Robert G. Hoyland, "Arabic, Syriac, and Greek Historiography in the First Abbasid Century," *ARAM* 3 (1991): 217–39; Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium"; and, Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lxxxii–lxxxiii. Mango's argument that George is largely responsible for the portion attributed to Theophanes has been accepted and incorporated. 'Largely responsible' is still up for discussion. A minimalist interpretation posits that Theophanes wrote the chronicle from notes left by George, while a maximalist that George left drafts which Theophanes arranged. For a recent expression of the opposing view, see Alexander P. Kazhdan, in collaboration with Lee Francis Sherry and Christina Angelidi, "The Monastic World Chronicle: Theophanes the Confessor," in *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)*, 205–34. See the discussion in Paul Speck, *Kaiser Leon III., die Geschichtswerke des Nikephoros und des Theophanes und der Liber Pontificalis*, Poikila Byzantina 19 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2002), 415–41 of the origins of the various references to Artemios (later the emperor Anastasios II), covered by Theophanes in his entries for AM 6205–6211. In the text's concluding entries, the syntactical patterns of George the Synkellos interweave with those of Theophanes. Andrzej Kompa, "In Search of Syncellus' and Theophanes' Own Words: The Authorship of the *Chronographia* Revisited," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 73–92. For the most recent introduction and guide to scholarship on the *Chronicle* of Theophanes and specifically its authorship see: Leonora Neville, "Chronicle of Theophanes," in *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, 61–71.

20   George the Synkellos and his *Chronographia* still stand apart from accounts of the socio-political context of the ninth century. An exception: Patricia Varona, "Three Clergymen against Nikephoros I: Remarks on Theophanes' Chronicle (AM 6295–6303)," *Byzantion* 84 (2014): 485–509.

George's exact contribution to the *Chronicle* before he handed over the project in AD 810 remains unclear not only because of the reasons just articulated, but also because of the very nature of the text itself. It is illuminating here to picture the complexities of the joint written efforts of George and Theophanes to produce the single text of the *Chronographia* as the joint production of a woven textile. Not only do George and Theophanes seem to have each woven portions of their shared text, but many if not most of the threads they each used were repurposed from previous texts. The *Chronographia* was created, to a large extent, by joining together and editing excerpts from other historical sources.[21] Thus, even when we might feel sure of which of the two figures is responsible for weaving a specific thread or passage of older material into the fabric of the whole cloth, the exact way in which that edited passage was "authored" must also be defined.[22]

The task of identifying multiple authorial hands in a text that is largely composed of edited or re-written excerpts is clearly an Escher-esque rabbit hole, as has been proven by decades of work to apply the source-critical method to this problem.[23] Brilliant minds such as I. Rochow,[24] C. Mango and

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[21]   For a relevant discussion of the medieval historian as both critical *reader* of texts and at the same time *writer* of history, see Gabrielle M. Spiegel on the "social space a text occupies" in "History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (1990): 59–86.

[22]   For an analysis of the various ways in which the author of the *Chronicle* repurposed the "threads" or earlier texts see: Jakov Ljubarskij, "Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structure in Byzantine Historical Writings," *Symbolae Osloenses* 73, no. 1 (1998): 5–22. Tellingly, there are different overall patterns in the different approach to the excerpted material in the *Chronography* as opposed to the *Chronicle*. In the *Chronography* (covering *annus mundi* or AM 1–5776) excerpts from other texts are almost always delineated as such and the original author is noted, while in the *Chronicle* (covering AM 5777–6305) excerpts from other texts are unattributed. This has made the first half of the *Chronographia* project, the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos, a treasure trove for otherwise lost historical sources. See: Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. 2, *Historical Chronology*, Oxford-Warburg Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 540–542, 548.

[23]   For an excellent introduction to the method as applied to the *Chronography* see: Wolfram Brandes, "Pejorative Phantomnamen im 8. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkritik des Theophanes," in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Lars M. Hoffman and Anuscha Monchizadeh, MVB 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 93–125.

[24]   Ilse Rochow, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes: Quellenkritisch-historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715–813* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1991).

R. Scott,[25] and P. Speck[26] have all valiantly (and in many cases successfully) worked to cut through to the source material in search of originality and veracity. Nevertheless, the task of accounting for every passage in a work such as the *Chronographia* is surely Sisyphean. C. Mango and R. Scott's correct caution that the text was "unstable" well after AD 815—that for some time it was still being edited, modified, and even rearranged—means that any adjudication between either George or Theophanes as author must always bear in mind that a third, unknown author may actually be responsible for a particular detail.[27] A consensus concerning what to make of the relationship of George the Synkellos to the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes, or what to make of the historical figure of Theophanes himself, seems as far off today as decades ago.[28] It remains the case that to use any specific passage from the *Chronicle* as

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25   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*.

26   A paradigmatic work of P. Speck's in this vein is: Paul Speck, *Das geteilte Dossier: Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros*, Poikila Byzantina 9 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1988). More recently, see the table comparing the accounts in Theophanes' chronicle to the chronicle of Nikephoros I in Speck, *Kaiser Leon III.*, 49–59. The late Professor Speck's final comments on the extent to which a first (or second) "Dossier" of George the Synkellos lies behind the chronicle of Theophanes should be consulted at Speck, *Kaiser Leon III.*, 375–76.

27   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lxii.

28   In a recent collection of studies, W. Treadgold renewed the long-standing argument that George the Synkellos is the functional author of the entire *Chronographia*. Treadgold, "Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus." Conversely, A. Kompa identified unique first-person grammatical structures in both the *Preface* attributed to Theophanes and in the latter portions of the *Chronicle*. Kompa, "Gnesioi Filoi." Then again, C. Zuckerman gave new life to an argument by P. Speck (*Das geteilte Dossier: Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros*. And updated in: Yannopoulos, *Théophane de Sigriani*) that the "Theophanes" to whom the *Chronicle* is attributed can in no wise be safely identified with the historic person of "Theophanes the Confessor." C. Zuckerman asserted that we should speak only of "Theophanes the Chronicler" when referring to the authorial persona behind the *Chronicle*. Zuckerman, "Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler." Clearly all three of these points (and more) are correct: we cannot state unequivocally that the historical Theophanes "the Confessor" is the author of the *Chronicle*; the unique grammatical structures which the *Preface* uses do indicate the author of that text and the author of the final entries speak with the same voice (to whomever that voice might belong); and, thinking of the *Chronographia* as a single intellectual project—with George the Synkellos rather than Theophanes as the intellect behind it—seems the most productive approach.

a "historical source" on the event or events it describes is to stride into a mine-field of philological controversy.[29]

Nevertheless, stride historians must. It is impossible to avoid using the *Chronographia* not only for the study of Byzantium but of the entire Eastern Mediterranean in the Early Middle Ages. The *Chronographia* is one of only two surviving Greek narrative accounts of historical events from the early seventh century to the end of the eighth.[30] Its account is held to be superior to the alternative work, the so-called *Short History* of patriarch Nikephoros I (r. 806–815).[31] Despite some apparently shared sources, Nikephoros' work ends with AD 769, whereas the *Chronographia* extends the narrative up to AD 813. Furthermore, the *Chronographia* includes a great deal of unique material concerning the expansion of Islam and the reign of the ʿUmayyads in Damascus that seems to have been composed by relative contemporaries of these events in Syria—the so-called "Eastern Source."[32] Thus, despite the persuasiveness

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29   In 1997, C. Mango and R. Scott stated their belief that to move forward with their transla-
      tion they had to exclude much of the source-critical work on Theophanes, specifically of
      P. Speck: "A stream of publications by Professor Paul Speck of Berlin, concerned directly or
      indirectly with Theophanes and by now amounting to several thousand pages, has put us
      in a more difficult position. Professor Speck offers many incisive observations, but these
      are intermingled with so much hypothetical speculation that we decided, after some
      hesitation, to make only occasional reference to his works." Mango and Scott, *Chronicle
      of Theophanes Confessor*, vi. A review of Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzanz unter Eirene und
      Konstantin VI: 780–802, mit einem Kapitel über Leon IV (775–780) von Ilse Rochow*, BBS 2
      (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996) suggested its major contribution was to help the
      reader "out of Paul Speck's labyrinth of proposals and the never-ending surgery of the cor-
      pus of the sources." Evangelos Chrysos, "Review: Byzanz unter Eirene und Konstantin VI.
      (780–802)," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 22 (1998): 307–8. See Speck's response to
      these comments in Speck, *Kaiser Leon III.*, 11–15.

30   For a survey of various other accounts of the seventh century see: James D. Howard-Johnston,
      *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh
      Century*, ARCA, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers, and Monographs (Oxford: Oxford
      University Press, 2011).

31   For a recent and persuasive study arguing for the sophistication and value of Nikephoros'
      Short History see now: Dragoljub Marjanović, *Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century
      Byzantium: The Short History of Nikephoros of Constantinople*, CEMS 2 (Amsterdam:
      Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

32   C. Mango's prescient claim in Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?"—that
      George the Synkellos' sources were largely gathered from the monasteries of Syria is only
      now being fully pursued. The importance of the issue for reading the *Chronographia* is
      displayed in Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians* where the author discusses much
      of the *Chronographia* as George's translation of the chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa
      and its continuation (to 780/3). On the terms of identifying an "Eastern Source" for the
      accounts of the Near East in the *Chronographia* see: Maria Conterno, "Palestina, Siria,
      Costantinopoli: La 'Cronografia' di Teofane Confessore e la mezzaluna fertile della

of D. Marjanović's recent argument for the sophistication and value of Nikephoros' *Short History*, the fact remains that the history of the Eastern Mediterranean from the death of the Prophet in AD 632 to the ascension of Leo V in AD 813 runs through the *Chronographia* of George and Theophanes. The importance of the *Chronographia* means that historians and philologists cannot let up on the struggle with how to read it.

Scholars' tireless work to apply the source critical method to the questions of origins and originator has undeniably produced a great deal of information. At the same time, it seems that our reliance on this method will never yield a consensus approach to reading the *Chronographia* as a whole text, in a way that can connect either the ideas or the narrative of the *Chronography* of George to the *Chronicle* of Theophanes. For all the importance and productivity of the questions scholars have asked about authorship and composition, these questions have nonetheless been overly governed by treating the originally integrated parts of the *Chronographia* project as independent works.[33] For all the attention and effort invested in and expended upon this work, the task of actually reading and interpreting the *Chronographia* as a whole has yet to begin.

The present study finds it is possible to sustain the paradoxes in our evidence and still produce a comprehensive account of the *Chronographia*. Instead of using the surviving evidence to ask how the text was written, we can use the surviving evidence to ask how the text was read. The problem of authorship is a stumbling block for the twenty-first-century historian and philologist but did not inhibit ninth-century readers.[34] If we turn directly to the surviving

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storiografia nei 'secoli bui' di Bisanzio" (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2011) and the competing assessments in: Robert G. Hoyland, "Agapius, Theophilos, and Muslim Sources," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 355–64; Maria Conterno, "Theophilos, 'The More Likely Candidate?' Towards a Reappraisal of the Question of Theophanes' 'Oriental Source(s),'" in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 383–400.

33 Before C. Mango and R. Scott's translation and study of the *Chronicle*, I. Ševčenko offered several proposals regarding this issue in Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium." Nevertheless, his article continues to be cited primarily in the debate over whether George or Theophanes is responsible for the latter portion of the chronicle and whether George was from Palestine or simply travelled there to find sources. For recent work looking at chronicles in general as works of ideology, see the journal *The Medieval Chronicle* edited by Erik Cooper where Byzantine and eastern chronicles in general continue to be under-represented, excepting Roger D. Scott, "The Byzantine Chronicle," *The Medieval Chronicle* 6 (2009): 31–57.

34 On authorship as a stumbling block: note the despair expressed by J. Lubarskij—that the historical-critical method's complete disintegration and decontextualization of the *Chronicle* in particular has resulted in the total neglect, if not literary death, of its "author."

material artefacts, we find that Constantinopolitan readers were not perplexed
by our problems. The surviving manuscripts are sufficient to allow us to read
the work in its entirety as a piece of literature produced for and in the particular
social and historical context of early- and mid-ninth-century Constantinople.[35]
The manuscripts make no secret of the authors' collaboration with the *Preface*
of Theophanes explicitly stating that his own authorial *auctoritas* rested on
George the Synkellos' personal request that he complete the project. In other
words, the one thing that is consistent in the actual ninth-century *realia* of
the surviving manuscripts is that the text was presented as a continuous chro-
nography written by two authors working in harmony. In these manuscripts
both "texts" are ubiquitously presented back-to-back.[36] Thus, the manuscripts
really do have a clear answer to the question that has troubled historians for
so long: what does the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos have to do with
the *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor?[37] The manuscripts' unanimous
answer: everything.

2   Essential Terms and Their Implications for Reading

I will now clarify and define the specific terms which this present book uses to
identify the different portions of the *Chronographia*. This terminology corrects
a dissonance between scholarly discourses around the *Chronographia* project
and the surviving material evidence of its transmission and use in the medi-
eval period. I have already been using the term ***Chronographia*** as *both* the
joint historical project to write the chronography of the universe from AM 1 to
AM 6305 (AD 813), *and* in the specific sense of the resulting jointly authored
text that contains all of that content. I use the traditional titles ***Chronography***
(of George the Synkellos) and ***Chronicle*** (of Theophanes) to denote the earlier
and the latter halves of the text of the *Chronographia*, but I redefine where to

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"[For] 'narrativists' the author is dead, for Paul Speck's followers he never existed at all."
Ljubarskij, "Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism." Quotation at p. 11.

35   An attempt to read the *Chronicle* as a coherent entity was made in Igor S. Čičurov,
*Vizantijskie istoričeskie sočineniâ: "Hronografiâ" Feofana, "Breviarij" Nikifora: teksty,
perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980). Though this work has only been acces-
sible to me through the translations of my research assistant Aidar Raev, I understand
that my approach differs in (1) not relying on a strong view of Theophanes as the author;
(2) fully accepting joint authorship of the latter part of the chronicle; (3) incorporating
the *Chronography* and its manuscripts.

36   On the relationship between the surviving manuscripts of the respective works, see:
Torgerson, "From the Many, One?"

37   Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?"

locate the split between those two halves. My redefinition accords with how the text was transmitted and read in the Middle Ages rather than how it has been transmitted and studied in the modern era.

As I will explain fully in chapter 1, I use the ***Chronography* of George the Synkellos** to refer to approximately eighty percent of the work attributed to George the Synkellos alone (from the Creation of the World in AM 1 or 5492 BC to the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in AM 5434 or 63 BC). However, I use the ***Chronicle* of George and Theophanes** to refer to the remainder of George's *Chronography* covering AM 5434 (or 63 BC) to AM 5776 (or AD 283), *as well as* to the entire text attributed to Theophanes, covering AM 5777 (or AD 284) to AM 6305 (or AD 813). Thus, from this point forward—for the remainder of this book—***Chronography*** will now refer specifically to George's work covering AM 1 to AM 5434 (or 5492 BC to 63 BC), and ***Chronicle*** will refer to George and Theophanes' work covering AM 5434 to AM 6305 (or 63 BC to AD 813). These redefinitions make it possible to explain the contents of our key manuscripts without inventing neologisms.[38]

I produce my readings of the *Chronographia* from the three surviving ninth-century Greek manuscripts of the work, all of which contain (or at least did so originally) the portion of the text that I just defined as the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes. The earliest exemplar of the *Chronicle* is housed in Paris at the Bibliothèque nationale de France as *Grec* 1710, and is frequently cited as *Parisinus Graecus 1710* (hereafter *PG 1710*). It was copied in Constantinople in approximately the middle of the ninth century and its hand has been attributed to the monastery of St. John in Stoudios.[39] At present *PG 1710* only

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38   In the 2015 volume *Studies in Theophanes*, F. Ronconi and I used the terms *Chronography1* (AM 1–AM 5434) and *Chronography2* (AM 5434–AM 5776) to denote the two portions of the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos. See Torgerson, "From the Many, One?"; Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'" Our use of these terms was for clarity of analysis and debate with our colleagues; our arguments having been accepted, my reversion to the traditional terminology here is to avoid unnecessary confusion.

39   B. Fonkich took the script to be one of the earliest examples of Studite minuscule, as early as the 830s but more likely from the 840s in Boris L. Fonkich, "Sur la datation et les origines du manuscrit parisien de la 'Chronographie' de Theophane (cod. Paris. gr. 1710)—orig. 1996," in *Grecheskie rukopisi evropeĭskikh sobraniĭ: paleograficheskie i kodikologicheskie issledovaniĭa, 1988–1998 gg.* (Moskva: Indrik, 1999), 58–61. The argument was updated in Filippo Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane': notes paléographiques et codicologiques," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 121–47. At pp. 133–138, Ronconi argues for mid-ninth century by comparing the earliest surviving minuscules (ca. 835) from the imperial monastery St. John in Stoudios, to later manuscripts from that same house (Moscow, GIM, *Sinod. gr.* 254 [*Vlad.* 117] copied in ca. 880 by the hieromonk Athanasius), and work done in Bithynia by the monk Eustace at St. Anne in Chios (Meteora, *Monē Metamorphōseōs* 591, copied in ca. 861/2).

contains the portion of the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes alone but the manuscript was altered and rebound in the Middle Ages: it has been shown to have originally contained the entire *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes, as I defined it above.[40] The two other surviving ninth-century Greek manuscripts are known as "sister" manuscripts—different copies from the same recension. One is housed at Christ Church College Library at Oxford University as *Wake Greek 5*, and the other at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana under shelf mark *Vat. gr. 155*, often cited as *Vaticanus Graecus 155* (hereafter *VG 155*).[41] These manuscripts were produced between AD 867 and the early tenth century in Constantinople or its environs.[42] These two manuscripts' original contents were also identical to the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes, as defined above.[43]

I focus this study primarily on the manuscript *PG 1710*. I do so because our recently changed understanding of that manuscript has direct implications for the original context of the *Chronographia*'s reception. When K. de Boor published his critical edition of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes in 1883, he understood this manuscript to be from the mid-tenth century. Working from other medieval manuscripts—all of which contained the *Chronicle* in an entirely different format from *PG 1710*—de Boor decided that *PG 1710* represented a later "epitome" of the original *Chronicle*.[44] At times de Boor preferred its version of particular passages (in such instances the manuscript's text appears in the critical edition), but by and large he ignored the textual variations in this manuscript and especially its unique format. Nonetheless, we now hold that this is unquestionably the earliest copy of the *Chronicle* to survive.[45]

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40 See: Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'"

41 See Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'" For the twentieth-century "discovery" of *Wake Greek 5* see: J. B. Bury, "An Unnoticed Ms. of Theophanes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 14, no. 2 (1905): 612–13; Nigel G. Wilson, "A Manuscript of Theophanes in Oxford," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 357–60; and, Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xcv–xcviii.

42 Marco D'Agostino, *La minuscola "tipo Anastasio" dalla scrittura alla decorazione* (Bari: Levante, 1997); Juan Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 159–76.

43 *VG 155* is missing quires at the beginning and end: it begins partway through George's text (ff. 1r–63v). See: Mosshammer, *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia*, 361.2. The *Chronicle* of Theophanes in the same manuscript (ff. 64r–331v) is missing its final 27 years ending at the beginning of the entry for AM 6278 (AD 785/6), with de Boor's 461.10.

44 De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2:364–65: "In *Regius* [*Parisinus Graecus*] *1710* we have more an excerpted edition than a direct copy of the chronicle" (Wir haben im Regius 1710 viel mehr eine excerpirende Bearbeitung, als eine direkte Abschrift der Chronik).

45 See: Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'"

Based on this new paradigm, I do not focus so much on the text as found in *PG 1710* as upon the format in which the manuscript presents that text. Though an earlier manuscript does not necessarily mean closer in appearance and contents to a lost original, I yet hold that the way in which *PG 1710* presents the text of the *Chronicle* reflects the original form in which this second half of the *Chronographia* project was read. Prioritizing this form fundamentally changes the sort of text we take the *Chronicle* (and thus the *Chronographia* as a whole) to be. To take the most substantial difference (which will be analyzed at length in chapter 1), the version of the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* does not follow an annalistic logic (where a new year determines a break and a new entry), but it follows a regnal logic (a new emperor determines the narrative breaks). M. Jankowiak recently made a version of this point—that the true chronology of the *Chronicle* is built on regnal years—in his comprehensive discussion of the dating system of the *Chronicle*.[46] I take Jankowiak's argument for the true internal logic of the *Chronicle*'s dating of events several steps further by drawing on the visual aspects which distinguish entries in the manuscripts, and the implications of these for reading the text as a whole. It is not quite enough to recognize that the *Chronicle*'s dating was built on a regnal as opposed to a universal annual system. It must also be recognized that the entire *Chronographia* project originally structured its contents into the reigns of emperors, and not into the individually distinct annual year-by-year entries (whether regnal or universal) that scholars have become accustomed to working with via the critical edition and translation of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes.

In order to follow my arguments for these points and their implications for reading it is necessary to understand the ways in which the *Chronographia* dated events and entries. The dating system of the *Chronographia* is characterized by multiplicity rather than singularity. Our authors drew upon and used multiple means of calculating years. Their contribution was not chronological invention so much as synthesis, establishing synchronies between dissonant calculations: the *Chronographia*'s calculations of universal years was not even the invention of George or Theophanes.[47] The *Chronographia* identified years with multiple labels, noting events by the year in an emperor's reign in which

46   Marek Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 58. "The real chronological backbone of the *Chronicle* is the regnal years of the Roman emperors, which were easier to correlate with the chronological systems used by Theophanes' sources."

47   For an overview of the variety across the Early Middle Ages of ways to calculate annual time, see: Deborah M. Deliyannis, "Year-Dates in the Early Middle Ages," in *Time in the Medieval World*, ed. Chris Humphrey and W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2001), 5–22. The standard account of the Byzantine context remains: Venance

they occurred, but also by the Byzantine fifteen-year tax or "indiction" cycle, by the year from the Incarnation of Christ (which it dated to our 8 BC), by the year-of-the world or year from the Creation (which it dated to our 5492 BC, the so-called Alexandrian era), and more.[48]

The relationship of the Year-of-the-World dates to the appearance of the *Chronographia* in its manuscripts is the most important of these to clarify. It is well known that the *Chronographia*'s reckoning by year from Creation, by the Year-of-the-World, is at times internally inconsistent. Nonetheless, it is still generally recognized as being fundamental to the composition of the *Chronographia* and as such is the standard form by which scholars refer to every and all specific entries in the work, even when the work itself does not use such a Year-of-the-World label for a specific entry.[49] When the *Chronographia* provided Year-of-the-World labels to entries it of course did so in Greek as an Ἔτος Κόσμου. Since by the ninth century it was a convention to utilize a Year-of-the-World in the chronographic traditions in both Greek and Latin-speaking cultures, modern scholars conventionally utilize Latin *annus mundi* (abbreviated as AM) to refer to the Year-of-the-World in analyses of chronicles and chronographies in both language traditions. Contrary to this well-established scholarly convention of referring to any entry in the *Chronographia* of George and Theophanes by its "AM," it must be clarified that the text in its manuscripts only uses an AM date to denote a minority of its entries. Throughout this study I too will maintain conventional practice and also refer to entries in the *Chronographia* by their modern AM label in order to have a means of navigating through the text of the *Chronographia*. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that the *Chronographia* as a whole reckoned by rulers' eras and the *Chronicle* in particular reckoned (as we will see in chapter 1) by the year of the reign of the current Roman emperor.

Acknowledging this difference shifts how we read the work, from a chronological encyclopedia to a narrative. When we read the *Chronicle* as it is presented in *PG 1710* and when we follow the organizational logic therein, we find

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          Grumel, *Traité d'études Byzantines*, vol. 1, *La Chronologie*, Bibliothèque Byzantine (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1958).

48   Grumel, *Chronologie*.

49   G. Ostrogorsky proposed a solution which is still essentially adhered to. George Ostrogorsky, "Die Chronologie des Theophanes im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 17 (1930): 1–56. See: Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lxi–lxiii. For a recent stimulating rejoinder that addresses the issue from the heuristic perspective of a chronographer attempting to harmonize inherently conflicting sources see: Marek Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 53–72.

that the work is structured as a narrative, or rather as a series of narratives juxtaposing images of Roman rulers as competing types. In this way, the reader of the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* was specially equipped and conditioned to read the history of the empire as a series of imperial portraits leading up to the recent and current emperors. Accordingly, a historicized reading of the *Chronicle* as preserved in the surviving manuscripts can not only circumvent the apparent impasse between authors, text, and context, but can give us access to new evidence for how to understand the entire project as a product of the milieu of ninth-century Constantinople.

3   The *Chronographia*'s Invective against Eusebius as Its Claim to *Auctoritas*

The *Chronographia* was not subtle about communicating its intended historical monumentality to its contemporaries. It defined and proclaimed its own authority. The *Chronographia* explicitly sought to establish itself as the new definitive masterwork in the genre and did so successfully by articulating a new and comprehensive vision of the universal, ecumenical world order—the Byzantine οἰκουμένη. The *Chronographia* made the case for its importance in the intellectual, political, and historiographical context of its day by directly critiquing the then-definitive chronography of universal Roman-Christian time: the so-called *Chronicle* of the fourth-century scholar and bishop, Eusebius of Caesarea. Identifying how and why George the Synkellos attacked Eusebius' *Chronicle* contextualizes the key concept in his *Chronographia*'s claim to authority over all previous universal historical accounts: its "accuracy" or "soundness" (ἀκρίβεια).[50]

Before entering into this discussion, it is important to clarify the work of Eusebius. Eusebius' comprehensive chronological work is conventionally called the *Chronicle*. It was composed in two distinct parts, and each part is now discussed by scholars with a different title: part one is the *Chronography* and part two is the *Chronological Canons*. The whole, the *Chronicle*, was written in Greek and distributed and revised between AD 311 and AD 326.[51] It would quickly supersede the chronicle of Julius Africanus of Alexandria (written

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50   For a complementary but distinct account of George the Synkellos' opposition to Eusebius' *Chronicle*, see: Patricia Varona, "Chronographical Polemics in Ninth-Century Constantinople: George Synkellos, Iconoclasm and the Greek Chronicle Tradition," *Eranos* 108 (2017): 117–36.

51   Richard W. Burgess, "The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici canones* and *Historia ecclesiastica*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1997): 471–504.

ca. AD 220) as the definitive Christian chronography. Other Greek univer-
sal chronicles would be written in the period between Eusebius and George
the Synkellos—such as the sixth-century *Chronicle* of John Malalas or the
seventh-century *Paschal Chronicle*—but George's particular engagement with
Eusebius' masterwork seems to indicate that for him and his audience, none
of these had replaced Eusebius' *Chronicle* as the definitive chronological
reference.

The second part of Eusebius' *Chronicle* is the better-known: the *Chronological
Canons* (Χρονικοὶ Κανόνες, or often simply *Canons*). The *Canons* covered the era
for which Eusebius believed a synchronized universal chronology could be
established, beginning from the reign of Ninus of Assyrian Ninevah and the
birth, in Ninus' forty-third year, of Abraham, and running up to our AD 325
(the year of the First Ecumenical Council). The *Canons* laid this chronology out
in the form of canon tables, a form which is now best preserved in the fourth-
century Latin translation of Jerome (Jerome's translation is, confusingly, called
the *Chronicle* and not the *Canons*).[52] George the Synkellos used this portion as
much as he critiqued it. George was primarily concerned with the philosophy
or methodology of the first part of Eusebius' work, a part which modern schol-
arship refers to as the *Chronography* (Χρονογραφεῖον).[53]

George's criticism of Eusebius is best understood in comparison with his
comments on the work of Eusebius' esteemed predecessor Julius Africanus.[54]
Africanus had predicted that the world would only last until AM 6000—a
year which came and went 300 years before the *Chronographia* was written.

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52   On the particularly inventive format of this second part of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, the *Canons*,
      see Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of
      the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press
      of Harvard University Press, 2006). The *Canons* and its unique appearance survive to
      the present day through translations, such as Jerome's Latin adaptation in AD 380. See:
      Mosshammer, *Chronicle of Eusebius*, 65–83. Jerome's text has been edited by Rudolf Helm,
      Eusebius Werke, vol. 7, *Die Chronik des Hieronymus / Hieronymi Chronicon*, 3rd ed., 2 vols.,
      GCS 47 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1984). Thanks to Jerome the *Canons* was received in the
      Latin West as the definitive chronological reference for centuries, even after the alterna-
      tive calculations of the Venerable Bede in the late 8th century. See: Faith Wallis, *Bede: The
      Reckoning of Time*, TTH 29 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999).

53   I retain this title for purposes of consistency with that scholarship. This first part is
      extant only in Armenian (with some Greek fragments), edited by Jean-Baptiste Aucher,
      Eusebii Pamphili: Chronicon bipartitum, 2 vols. (Venice, 1818). George refers to this work
      of Eusebius by three different terms: "chronography" (χρονογραφεῖον at AT 48 / M 36.17),
      "chronicles" (χρονικά at AT 55 / M 41.23), and "collected chronicle" (χρονικὴ συγγραφή at
      AT 243 / M 197.6).

54   On Africanus' work and its wide and influential reception see: Martin Wallraff, ed., *Julius
      Africanus und die christliche Weltchronik*, TUGAL 157 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006).

Nevertheless, George pointed out but excused this and other errors, support-ing Julius' key argument that Christ was born in AM 5500 and commending his overall approach. In one example we can see what exactly George wanted to praise in Africanus and blame in Eusebius. Julius Africanus had man-aged to badly misalign his chronology of the Greek kings and the Egyptian Pharaohs. Africanus had proven two floods in Attica—that of Ogygos and that of Deukalion—were 248 years apart. But then his chronology of Attic Greek kings made him put the first of these floods over a century earlier in respect to the Egyptian Pharaohs than did other chronographers. Nevertheless, when he arrived at the Egyptian Pharaoh Amosis (whom he held was also known as Misphragmouthis), Africanus did not want to contradict the traditional syn-chronization that this was the Pharaoh at the time of the Biblical Exodus, and that at this same time there was a flood in Attica. And so Africanus held on to the Exodus-Amosis synchronization and grabbed the later Attic flood, of Deukalion, to fulfill the tradition of concurrence with the Exodus. Africanus did this even though this contradicted his own chronology for Greece by nearly a century and a half.[55]

In all of this disastrous reckoning George found a virtue to set Africanus apart from the more internally consistent but—so he insisted—contemptible calculations of Eusebius. George's reasoning was that the

> dominant view constrained [Africanus] even though such reckoning does not square entirely with his own arguments; but it was because of the truth that he preferred to align himself with the majority opinion ... [the truth being that] the Exodus of Israel from Egypt [was] at the time of Phoroneus and Apis the kings of the Argives; this was when Amosis [or Misphragmouthis] was king of Egypt.[56]

George held that even though Julius Africanus' choice here made his work internally inconsistent, his decision to prefer a majority opinion over his own calculation made him "more committed to the truth than Eusebius."[57] Africanus committed errors in the particulars of his calculations, but he did not persist or insist on his errors as the truth.

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55   "Africanus—may he excuse me for saying this—found himself in a dilemma and in a self-contradiction asserted that it was Deukalion's flood instead of Ogygos'. And in this particular matter, he thereby committed an error...." AT 101 / M 79.

56   AT 88–89 / M 70.

57   AT 88 / M 69.

In contrast to this assessment of Julius Africanus, George asserted that he could not simply correct Eusebius' errors but needed to subject Eusebius' method to a systematic deconstruction.[58] George's charge was that while Africanus had erred in particular calculations, Eusebius had apparently contradicted "the mass of opinions held by men of such great wisdom," and instead inserted "his own opinion without proof."[59] Eusebius' error was his *persistence* in his "deranged thinking,"[60] his fault the insubordination of not turning to holy authority but instead holding to his own genius and creativity.[61] George's choice to judge between chronographers on the basis of their apparent submission to a consensus church tradition indicates that he judged chronological "accuracy" in the same terms as doctrinal orthodoxy: Eusebius' miscalculations in his tally of years were not merely incorrect, but stemmed from a heretical epistemology.[62]

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58   My account of George's deconstruction, or critique, presents Eusebius entirely from the perspective of the *Chronographia* in order to establish that text's accusations. I spend no time adjudicating issues of misinterpretation, misrepresentation, incorrect or corrupt citation, and outright slander in George's reading. For such an evaluation consult: Gabriel Bredow, "Dissertatio de Georgii Syncelli Chronographia," in *Georgius Syncellus et Nicephorus Constantinopolitani*, ed. Wilhelm Dindorf, vol. 2, CHSB (Bonn: Weber, 1829); Heinrich Gelzer, ed., *Sextus Julius Africanus und die Byzantinische Chronographie* (1880–1898; repr., Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1978); Adler and Tuffin, *Chronography of George Synkellos*, lx–lxxv.

59   George the Synkellos did hold that it was possible to contradict the majority tradition, but only when subjecting oneself to the *auctoritas* of the Septuagint. The passage continues: "His assertions are introduced in contradiction to the views of the majority, nay rather to the views of everyone; and even if there were a great deal of proof, they would have struggled to receive acceptance from those who have the intellectual capacity to make sound judgments about this matter." AT 95 / M 74. Or, in another place: "… compared with his superiors, Eusebius' reasoning was defective, and in contradicting them he recorded *opinions without evidence*." AT 102 / M 79. Emphasis mine.

60   George here is quoting Annianos (AT 48 / M 36) but later repeats the accusation about Eusebius' date for Moses: "by his illogical thinking—I dare not call it 'logic'—Amosis preceded Moses and the Exodus." AT 99 / M 77.

61   This explains why George described Eusebius' apparent errors of calculation or adjudication between sources as being stubborn even when confronted by the authority of "the Fathers." Referring to his dating of Moses as contemporaneous with Kekrops, "Eusebius agreed neither with Africanus nor with Josephos nor with anyone else." AT 90 / M 70. Note that just after this point, George quotes Eusebius' own preface at length. This is one of several moments in the text where George almost sidetracks the trajectory of the entire chronological project in an effort to disprove Eusebius. AT 93–95 / M 73–74.

62   It is not in fact strange that George would look for the relative orthodoxy of a Christian chronography, for scholars have identified the apologetic or ideological content of the entire tradition and genre. On the relationship between Julius Africanus' chronicle and

The two parts to Eusebius' *Chronicle*, described above, each had a different chronological method, and George's opposition to Eusebius focused on the methodology of the first part of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, the *Chronography*.[63] George was not concerned with the methodology of Eusebius' *Canons* (the second part).[64] Eusebius' *Chronography* presented a comparison between multiple chronologies of the early history of the world, from Creation up to the time of Abraham, without definitively adjudicating between or synchronizing them. Eusebius' stated methodology for this first volume is preserved in his *Preface*, transmitted via the (surviving) Armenian translation. Eusebius found the texts surviving from this era to be incommensurable, and so since chronology relies on a comparative methodology, Eusebius believed that without viable synchronization between records, chronological knowledge was simply impossible. He thus took an agnostic position, stating that the chronology of this period was unrecoverable:

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ideology, see Richard W. Burgess and Martin Wallraff, "Apologetic and Chronography: The Antecedents of Julius Africanus," in Wallraff, *Julius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronik*, 17–44; Gregor Staab and Martin Wallraff, "Chronographie als Philosophie. Die Urwahrheit der Mosaischen Überlieferung nach dem Begründungsmodell des Mittelplatonismus bei Julius Africanus," in Wallraff, *Julius Africanus und die Christliche Weltchronik*, 61–82.

63   On the reconstruction of Eusebius' chronicle see especially: Brian Croke, "The Originality of Eusebius' Chronicle," *American Journal of Philology* 103, no. 2 (1982): 195–200. Comprehensive discussion of earlier scholarship in Mosshammer, *Chronicle of Eusebius*. History of chronicle writing to George the Synkellos in Adler, *Time Immemorial*. In the *Preface* to his second volume, the *Chronological Canons*, Eusebius states: "Indeed, if you do not falter in carefulness and when you have diligently pored over the Divine Scripture, from the birth of Abraham back to the Flood of the whole earth, you will find 942 years, and from the flood back to Adam, 2242, in which no completely Greek, or barbarian or, to speak in general terms, gentile history is found. That is why the present little work traces the later years from Abraham and Ninus down to our time; and starts by displaying Abraham of the Jews, Ninus and Semiramis of the Assyrians, because at this time Athens was not a city, nor had the kingdom of the Argives received its name, as the Sicyonians alone were flourishing in Greece." Translation from Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius' *Canons* (ed. Helm, 1:14–15) by Pearse et al., "The Chronicle of St Jerome," The Tertullian Project, 2005, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_01_prefaces.htm.

64   The method of George's *Chronographia* agreed with Eusebius' statements in his second volume, the *Chronological Canons*. A dramatic irony: Jerome's decision to only translate the *Canons* and not the *Chronography* meant that Latin world chroniclers both venerated Eusebius' work and agreed with the premise of George the Synkellos' critique. The Eusebian position on ante-diluvian agnosticism was represented in Latin by Augustine's *City of God*. See: Giuseppe Zecchini, "Latin Historiography: Jerome, Ororius and the Western Chronicles," in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century AD*. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 317–45.

Permit me, right at the outset, to caution everyone against [believing that] there can be complete *accuracy* with respect to chronology. Indeed, we would benefit by contemplating what that wise Teacher told his acquaintances: 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority' [Acts 1:7]. It seems to me that [Jesus], as God and Lord, delivered this succinct verdict not solely regarding the end of the world but about all times, in order to discourage those who would dare attempt such a futile undertaking. Let us also, in our own words, confirm the accuracy of the Teacher's dictum, for it is not possible to know unerringly the chronology of the entire world, not from the Greeks, not from the barbarians, not from other [peoples], not even from the Hebrews. We would be pleased if just two points were taken from our words. First, do not be deceived into believing, as others do, that chronology [always] can be precisely determined. Second, despite this, to the extent that it is possible, use clarity to recognize the nature of the investigation which confronts you, and then proceed resolutely.[65]

Thus, when Eusebius' *Chronography* presented the period from Creation to Abraham, the work simply displayed the rival dates of available accounts and translations of these scriptures side by side: Hebrew, and then their Greek, Samaritan, and Syriac translations, but also non-scriptural texts such as the (no longer extant) works of Manetho and Berossus. By presenting these different accounts and translations as equal options, Eusebius' system indicated that time in the early history of the world was dissolute, amorphous, unknowable. Eusebius did give the tally of 2,242 years from the Creation up to Abraham as a proposition, but this was as a hypothesis, a viable though ultimately unprovable possibility.

Such an approach was unacceptable to George the Synkellos. Eusebius' claim that "accuracy" was not possible was to be rejected outright. Where Eusebius asserted that it was necessary to be agnostic about time in this era, George asserted that the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew scriptures) gave accurate or reliable (ἀκριβής) access to the prehistoric past. George encapsulated this assertion in his central thesis and core

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65   Translation from the Armenian version of the *Chronography* (ed. Aucher, 1:4–5) by Robert Bedrosian, "Eusebius' *Chronicle*: Translated from Classical Armenian," Attalus, 2008, http://www.attalus.org/armenian/euseb.html. R. Bedrosian's translation is divided into sections (here at sec. 1) and keyed to Aucher's Armenian edition (Venice, 1818). For the older German translation see Josef Karst, *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 5, *Die Chronik des Eusebius aus dem Armenischen übersetzt*, GCS 20 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), 1.25–2.6.

epistemological claim, the idea of the First-Created Day. As chapter 3 will explain, the idea of the First-Created Day determined that access to a universal pre-historic time was possible through divine grace. The *Chronographia* made this claim from the premise that the temporal order of the universe stood on the chronological point (ἡ ἐποχή) of Christ's Resurrection, and that since the Resurrection was knowable in the present through the experience of worship, the temporal event of Creation was also knowable. The *Chronographia* insisted that through a correct reading of inspired scriptures (specifically the Septuagint) time could be accessed even where historical records failed.

George began his polemic against Eusebius' method by critiquing Eusebius' own statements about his reliance on the Septuagint. Eusebius had claimed to prefer the Septuagint, but in practice would turn to the Hebrew version of the scriptures when it was easier to synchronize those with other surviving sources.[66] A key example came when, rather than harmonizing the Septuagint translation of Judges with a statement by Paul in The Acts of the Apostles, Eusebius derived a solution from the Hebrew text of Judges.[67] Eusebius further scorned the testimony of the Septuagint when, in an attempt to date

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66 For instance, in one case Eusebius followed the chronology of the Hebrew text to solve problems of synchronization in *Judges*. See George the Synkellos' account at AT 96 / M 75. Correspondingly see Eusebius, *Chronicle*, trans. Bedrosian, sec. 30 and 23 = ed. Aucher, 1:149–51 and 1:113–116 = trans. Karst, 45.13–19 and 37.28–36. Eusebius described the Septuagint and Hebrew versions ambiguously as a "long" and "short" chronology, stating casually that he had chosen the "short"—actually the Hebrew—version (AT 95 / M 74–75). See: Eusebius, *Chronicle*, trans. Bedrosian, sec. 33 = ed. Aucher, 1:162–164 = trans. Karst, 50.5–23 and compare the *Chronographia* at: AT 253 / M 204. See also the discussion of Eli who reigned, according to the Septuagint, for 20 years, but for 40 years "according to the Hebrew version (which Eusebius also followed, even though he promised to do otherwise)." AT 256 / M 205. And the comment that after the judge Abdon "some sort of Hebrew tradition" incorrectly drops 40 years of Philistine domination of Israel, which Eusebius follows, though "manifestly in contradiction with scripture." AT 239 / M 193.

67 George took Eusebius' statement that "the divine apostle was not being strictly accurate when he spoke of 450 years of the judges, and was using instead a more popular tradition of interpretation" as a slight to the apostle. The actual citation is Eusebius, *Chronicle*, trans. Bedrosian, sec. 33 = ed. Aucher, 1:162–164 = trans. Karst, 50.17–23: "But regarding the holy apostle, I believe that he has not provided as it were a treatise on chronology, nor has he even handed down a calculation with precise accuracy, when he adduces the aforementioned years; rather as a side-issue in his teaching of the Word of salvation, he makes mention of chronology, using a more popular tradition of interpretation than the reading in Judges." As quoted in AT 253n5. Note George's statement on his own method: "But as for me, I follow the divine Paul *and* the book of Judges." AT 255 / M 205. Emphasis mine.

the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Jews as a literal seventy years, he used the Olympiads to correct for inconsistencies.[68]

George took his critique of Eusebius to the next level when he came to discuss Eusebius' choice to exclude one Kaïnan from his chronology. While Eusebius had excluded this figure from his reckoning, George recorded Kaïnan as the thirteenth descendant from Adam and as having a lifespan of 130 years.[69] George claimed that this difference was damning evidence that Eusebius scorned the scriptures themselves, for Kaïnan was mentioned in the Gospel of Luke.[70]

> It never ceases to astound me that this same Eusebius is called 'astute' by some. This is obviously stated by way of *antiphrasis* (opposition). For he has in this way clearly dared to oppose divine scriptures, even as he has promised total accuracy and investigation into truth, so he says, on the basis of the version of scripture preserved by the Hebrews and Samaritans and Septuagint translators, all of which disagree as a result of textual variation. Three times he set forth the chronology, and in not one of these three cases did he make mention of the post-diluvian Kaïnan, son of Arphaxad. Now if Kaïnan did not appear in these copies

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68   W. Adler and P. Tuffin note that Eusebius' *Chronicle* gives conflicting dates for the first Olympiad as the 2nd year of Aischylos in the *Canons* (*Chronicle*, ed. Helm 1:86b) and the 12th year of Aischylos in the *Chronography* (*Chronicle*, trans. Karst 88.13). AT 284n7. When Eusebius later not only used an Olympiad date but gave the wrong Olympiad number (137 instead of 139), George could not help pointing out the error, though it served no purpose in his own project. AT 413 / M 343. "[Eusebius] abandoned the sequence appropriate to the chronological issue under consideration and took refuge in the Olympiads, as if he had forgotten himself and those who had subjugated the nation, and who held the Jewish nation in captivity for about thirty years after their conquest. This was entirely at odds with an *accurate* chronological demonstration." AT 332 / M 271. Emphasis mine. George (ironically?) avoided the problem by taking the seventy years of captivity metaphorically. There he claimed to have avoided violating his own premises by basing his interpretation on a scripture written by the prophet Ezekiel.

69   "Arphaxad, when he was 135, begot Kaïnan in AM 2377.... According to some of the manuscripts, as well as Eusebius, Arphaxad lived another 403 years after begetting Sala. But these manuscripts we utterly disregard, since they have gone quite astray from a truthful account of the chronology and the generations.... [Africanus and Eusebius] entirely neglect to mention the second Kaïnan, whom the sacred books at every point in Genesis, as well as the Gospel according to Luke, have declared to have been Arphaxad's son, the thirteenth descendant from Adam, and the father of Sala, the fourteenth from Adam." AT 164 / M 132.

70   George also notes this error as an affront against the Septuagint. AT 113 / M 90. Besides the above citation, the error is noted explicitly again at: AT 114 / M 90; AT 244 / M 197; and AT 473 / M 375.

of scripture, how is it that he appears so clearly in the sacred scriptures of Genesis acknowledged in all the churches of Christ? How is it that the most divine Luke [the Evangelist], a man thoroughly trained in divine and human wisdom and incomparably superior to 10,000 Eusebioi, cites him in his sacred gospel as the thirteenth descendant of Adam? ... Eusebius was 290 years short[71] in the numbering of years from Adam up to the twentieth year of Constantine the Great[72] ... Surely then it is clearly evident that, owing to his own defective thinking, he shortened Assyrian chronology and did not accurately date the conquest of Troy. We have called attention here to this matter for no trifling reason; rather it is because of the pressing importance of accurately dating the conquest of Jerusalem, the burning of the temple, and the captivity that befell both the tribes in Samaria and the tribes at the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans whose kingdom began with Nabonasar.[73]

George built the differences between Eusebius' chronology and his own into a hyperbolic accusation. He had set up this moment by narrating multiple chronologies at different paces in order to bring recognized and significant historical figures from different civilizations into this same passage even though they were not actually synchronous—for instance setting the conquest of Troy and thus Aeneas as first of the Latin rulers in the same entry.[74] It was only by

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71   George had previously shown how Eusebius' original error of missing Kainan's 130 years had compounded with other errors to set his chronography now 290 years in the wrong. Eusebius' decision to exclude a 130-year span from his reckoning would influence his dates for all subsequent Hebrew patriarchs, leaders, and kings. Since Eusebius forgot to include Kaïnan, he would misdate Moses; the knock-on effect would result in a disjunction of 300 years between Eusebius' and George's chronologies. Moses: AT 97–98 / M 75–76. Eusebius put the Exodus at the 45th year of "Kekrops the Double Natured, the first king of the Athenians" in AM 3689; according to George the Synkellos it should be in AM 3989, "the twenty-second year of Aod." AT 222 / M 180. "Eusebius errs in his dating from Adam to Abraham, since he did not count the 130 years of the second Kaïnan, the son of Arphaxad, whom the LXX and the Gospel according to Luke number as the thirteenth from Adam." AT 129 / M 104.

72   The twentieth year of Constantine is the year in which he held the Council of Nicaea.

73   AT 244 / M 197–98. Emphasis mine.

74   Aeneas' proper entry is actually at AT 247–48 / M 200–201. The *Chronographia* also placed Nebuchadnezzar in the same entry as the conquest of Troy and its first mention of Aeneas—the first of the "Trojan" rulers in Italy—and thus the subsequent line of Roman emperors which in turn established the date of Christ's birth. Though Christ was dated according to Roman rule, to establish that date the Incarnation needed to also be synchronized with Alexander the Great and the kings of the Persians from Cyrus (who returned the Jews to Jerusalem) to Dareios, as at AT 339–45 / M 278–83. The Egyptian and Argive rulers who were contemporary with the conquest of Troy. From AM 4746

doing this that, in the above passage, it made sense for George to connect his chronology of Assyria to dating the conquest of Troy.[75] Similarly, bringing in the conquest of Troy made it possible to comment upon the knock-on effects of Eusebius' dating of the subsequent line of Roman emperors (mythologically begun with Aeneas) to Constantine I whose twentieth year saw the first Council of Nicaea in AD 325, which concluded Eusebius' work.[76] In this way George indicated how the chronology of Roman emperors, established by the date of the conquest of Troy, was essential to establishing the date of Christ's birth during the rule of Herod, which followed the Roman Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem.[77] All of this allowed George to show how, by misaligning the Hebrews in relation to the Greeks and Egyptians, Eusebius had to make further

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(AT 296 / M 241). Note that though he occurs much earlier, under the Assyrian Babios/ Tithonos' entry in AM 4325–4362 (AT 224 / M 181) he is noted as contemporary with Troy (AT 247–48 / M 200–201). The Egyptian Thouoris/Polybos in AM 4319–4369, and of course Agamemnon of the Argives in AM 4312–4330/4348 are noted as contemporaneous. AT 245 / M 199.

75 At this point in the *Chronographia*, George had just brought his account of the Assyrians and their sources to a conclusion, though he had skipped far ahead of the chronology of other nations to do so: the Assyrians' successors, the Medes, would not be introduced for fifty more pages. End of the Assyrians in AT 239 / M 193–94 (AM 4675). Beginning of the rule of the Medes in AT 287 / M 233–34 (AM 4676). This entry also included a general chronological summary, which is always an indication of a key moment in the text: "This was the 4330th year from Adam. From the birth of Abraham and the 43rd year of Ninos the second king of the Assyrian empire [AM 3312/3], there is a total of 1018 years. From the birth of Moses, which occurred in the forty-sixth year of Inachos the first king of the Argives, AM 3738, there is a total of 592 years up to the conquest of Troy, notwithstanding the view of Eusebius, whose error consists of an omission of 216 years." AT 246 / M 199.

76 From AT 296 / M 241 (AM 4746).

77 On the importance of Herod: "Afrikanos fails to say how many years Hyrkanos was ruler of the Jews … in addition to this he cuts off three years from Herod's rule … if we grant this as true, Herod will be found to have died in the first year of the Incarnation of the Lord and God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, which is totally at odds with the teachings of the gospels." AT 445 / M 373. See also the link of Troy to Aeneas to the Latins and then to Romulus in AT 248 / M 200–201. This can, of course, be seen by George's careful discussion of the dates for the reign of Augustus surrounding his dating of the incarnation in the *Chronicle*: Augustus Year 15 = AM 5472 (AT 450); Augustus Year 1 = AM 5458 (AT 454); Augustus Year 41 = AM 5499; Augustus 42 = AM 5500; Herod 32 = AM 5500 (AT 454). This was an essential move in a chronological system because Christ was dated according to the Romans, and so the Incarnation had to be synchronized with Alexander the Great and the kings of the Persians from Cyrus (who returned the Jews to Jerusalem) to Dareios. AT 339–45 / M 278–83.

compromises in his method and rely on inferior records such as the Olympiads, or the (no longer surviving) *Chronological Tables* of Castor of Rhodes.[78]

Why did all of this matter? I noted how for George, the concept which established Julius Africanus' status as a model chronographer was his attribute of "accuracy" (ἀκρίβεια). Given Julius' acknowledged and significant chronological errors, this must be understood as more than simply a statement that Julius' dates were correct. Eusebius' error was one which George readily acknowledged had also been made by his own model chronographer, Julius Africanus.[79] While George would state that "what Africanus said is *accurate* (ἀκριβής) ... but he found himself in a dilemma," on the other hand George insisted that "... compared with his superiors, Eusebius' reasoning was defective, and in contradicting them he recorded *opinions without evidence*."[80] As in the above extended passage, George went out of his way—using chronological leap-frogging—to condemn the entire sweep of Eusebius' *Chronicle* project for what was actually a single error. George's opposition extended beyond Eusebius' chronological calculations to his very person, for we have seen him turn Eusebius' few chronological errors into mistakes that damned the entire enterprise as not only an erroneous chronology, and not only a rejection of the sacrality and internal consistency of the Septuagint scriptures, but as a rejection of the chronology offered by the gospel writer Luke. Why?

In the extended passage above, George first asserted that Eusebius' choice of the supposedly incorrect version of the scriptures led him to eventually trust "pagan" sources over the scriptures themselves, but the key point seems to have been to distinguish his own and Africanus' chronologies as "accurate" while disparaging Eusebius' as full of "deranged thinking." By accusing Eusebius' chronology of Assyrian, Medio-Persian, and Macedonian kings as

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78   Instead of the respectable Chaldaean chronology in Diodoros, or at least the passable version of Kephalion, Eusebius depended upon the "entirely unreliable" Castor (Kastor) of Rhodes, a historian or annalist of the first century BC who composed six books of *Chronological Tables* which no longer survive. When George the Synkellos comes to discuss the period of the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, which must harmonize lists of Chaldaean-Assyrian kings with the Hebrew account, he demonstrates that the two most respected sources are Kephalion and Diodoros, and that of the two, Diodoros is to be relied upon. AT 241–3 / M 194–97. This choice was a direct result of Eusebius' original mistake: "He did this because he was trying to reconcile it with the faulty chronological reasoning to which he fell prey in his chronology from the Flood up to Abraham. For in his post-diluvian chronology, he did not include Kaïnan, son of Arphaxad." AT 244 / M 197.

79   AT 164 / M 132, and see above, footnote 69.

80   AT 102 / M 79. Emphasis mine.

being faulty, George concluded that Eusebius' chronology of Roman emperors must also be faulty and he perhaps embedded (in his reference to the Council of Nicaea) a reminder of the continuous debate over whether or not Eusebius had turned out to be a sympathizer of the heretic Arius.[81]

If George wanted to fully vilify Eusebius as a heretic, he could have easily done so here. And, interestingly, George and Theophanes' *Chronicle* later—in the context of the Council of Nicaea and its condemnation of Arianism—does make that accusation.[82] Here, in George's *Chronography*, however, it seems that his carefully crafted polemic served a different goal. He very nearly implicates Eusebius' line of thought with the same accusation that was levelled against heretics—that they denied the truth of the Incarnation—but stops just short. Here George held Eusebius in antagonism but refrained from denigration.

George would not have been alone among his contemporaries if he had stated an accusation of heresy against Eusebius. In AD 787 the Second Council of Nicaea had condemned Eusebius as the author of a letter that opposed the worship of icons and in doing so had labelled Eusebius an iconoclast heretic. Historians have since determined Eusebius did not actually write this letter purportedly sent by him to the empress Constantia (Constantine I's sister).[83] Nevertheless, at the time it was believed to be genuine. And, just as another famously spurious text, the *Donation of Constantine*, had become a touchstone for international diplomacy in this period, Eusebius' supposed letter had been swept up into the iconoclast controversy of the day. Before it was condemned by the 787 Council of Nicaea—called by Irene to lay out her policy of iconophilism—it had been cited in support of the 754 Council of *Hiereia*—called by Constantine V to lay out his policy of iconoclasm. The idea

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81   Eusebius' *Chronological Canons* was based on the Κανὼν Βασιλέων of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*, the definitive lists of ancient kings that was included in the famous astronomer's tables of synchronized calendars. In rehearsing Eusebius' systematic errors, George set down the fundamental premises for his date of the Incarnation in relation to this source that no chronographer could do without, the Κανὼν Βασιλέων. In these arguments George simultaneously took down his opponent, claimed the right to the Κανὼν Βασιλέων away from Eusebius, and established a new way of tallying the Incarnation. Note statements by George the Synkellos concerning the Incarnation as the epoch, or chronological point around which all reckoning must turn: AT 449 / M 376–77; AT 454 / M 381—AT 455 / M 382; AT 462 / M 38–AT 465 / M 390; AT 472 / M 395—AT 475 / M 397.

82   See for instance under AM 5818 and AM 5829.

83   Claudia Sode and Paul Speck, "Ikonoklasmus vor der Zeit? Der Brief des Eusebios von Kaisereia an Kaiserin Konstantia," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 54 (2004): 113–34. Following up on: Stephen Gero, "The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32, no. 2 (1981): 460–70.

that Eusebius was a proto-iconoclast heretic was developed even further into the accusation that Eusebius denied the truth of the Incarnation by a figure ideologically, if not directly, associated with George. Patriarch Nikephoros I—under whom George likely served as *synkellos* after the death of Tarasios—argued in his treatise known as the *Contra Eusebium* that Eusebius was guilty of this grave error.[84]

But, again, George did not make this accusation. Instead, he used his polemic against Eusebius to establish a binary which would persist over the entire *Chronographia*: an opposition between "sound" or "accurate" (ἀκριβής) thinking (which might even be chronologically inaccurate in some places) and thinking that was "deranged." The seemingly haphazard attacks against Eusebius in the above passages are not random pile-ons but are indications to a careful reader of what is at stake in George's chronological project. As discussed at length in part 2 of this book, the polemics of the *Chronographia* project do have an element of doctrinal critique in them (for instance in the monotheletism of Heraclius or the iconoclasm of Constantine V). However, like George's more holistic opposition to Eusebius on the basis of his entire chronological method (which could not be excused) rather than on the basis of one error (which could), the judgments against later emperors are not limited to theology but are comprehensive invectives, encompassing taxation and other fiscal policies as much as, if not more than, doctrinal pronouncements. George the Synkellos dismantled Eusebius' masterwork so that his *Chronographia* would supplant it but took care so that the final takeaway brought the reader's attention back to his own chronographic accomplishment. George could easily have framed his opposition to Eusebius in terms of Eusebius' supposed iconoclasm and so dismissed him out of hand, but instead George chose to frame his more nuanced opposition in terms of Eusebius' absence of ἀκρίβεια.

The *Chronographia* was produced in a milieu that for long has been read almost entirely through its opposition to the policy of iconoclasm. However, in this analysis of George's polemic against an accused iconoclast I have demonstrated that it is much more accurate to state that the *Chronographia*'s ideological framework set up an opposition to a wider-reaching *heretical mindset*, an opposition first defined by its debate with Eusebius' monumental *Chronicle*.

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84   Alexis Chryssostalis, *Recherches sur la tradition manuscrite du* Contra Eusebium *de Nicéphore de Constantinople* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2012). Edition, where it is denoted as the "fourth" book of his patriarch Nikephoros' *Antirrheticus*, in: Joannes Baptista Pitra, *Spicilegium solesmense: complectens sanctorum patrum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum*, vol. 1 (Paris: Firmin Didot Fratres, 1852), 373–503.

The long-standing premise that George and Theophanes' *Chronographia* was written to bolster the institution of the church and to promote opposition to imperial iconoclasm is not incorrect so much as it is too specific.[85] Heretical emperors suffered from the chronicler's vitriol, but none felt the sting so much as the "orthodox" emperor Nikephoros I. The *Chronographia* set itself against a much broader idea that will take us some time to unpack—a *heretical mindset* characterized (in its polemic against Eusebius) by "faulty reasoning," not iconoclasm. The *Chronographia*'s claim to *orthodoxy* was a claim to ἀκρίβεια: to being sound-minded, accurate, and reasonable, a reliable way of thinking about time and the past in line with the *logos* of the universe. It is anti-iconoclast only after it is anti-illogical-thinking. The *Chronographia*'s argument with Eusebius impels us to move from seeing it as a narrowly anti-iconoclast chronicle to focusing instead on the content of its entire ethical-political "doctrine." Put another way, we now know to ask what the authors actually meant by claiming to compose a sound or trustworthy account of time.

4   The Place of the Chronographia in Byzantine Chronography

The *Chronography*'s attack on Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle* set up the authority of the entire *Chronographia* project. We can assess the effectiveness of its claim with two categories of evidence: the degree to which Byzantines would go on to read the *Chronographia* as the masterwork in its genre, and the surprising disappearance of Eusebius' *Chronicle* from the Byzantine corpus of historical literature.

4.1   *The* Chronographia*'s Victory over the* Canons

The effectiveness of George the Synkellos' attack against Eusebius' *Chronicle* may well be measured by the fact that at some point before the tenth century, even as Jerome's Latin translation of the *Canons* continued to be copied, the work ceased to be reproduced in Greek. The disappearance of Eusebius' *Chronicle* may well be due to the Byzantine *intelligentsia* accepting George's attack against the premises and conclusions of the *Chronicle* and George's success in framing of his *Chronographia* as the reliable alternative.

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85   Marie-France Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 278–82.

Modern Byzantinists have drawn the wrong conclusion from the disappearance of Eusebius' *Chronicle* in Greek.[86] Eusebius' work must have existed through this period though scholars have assumed it did not, if for no other reason than that the *Chronographia*'s attack presumes that Eusebius' *Chronicle* was the definitive chronology of its day. Modern scholars' claims that it was no longer extant in Greek in the ninth century are based on two points: (1) there is no surviving complete Greek copy of the work, despite translations into Armenian, Syriac, and Latin;[87] and, (2) the work is absent from Patriarch Photios' mid-ninth-century *Bibliotheka*.

Explaining the disappearance of Eusebius' *Chronicle* not as due to a change in intellectual climate, but as due to a decline in the production of knowledge in this period is no longer a viable position. A lack of surviving sources and manuscripts has led scholars to rely on literal readings of claims of cultural decline (including from Theophanes himself).[88] Our understanding of the transmission and generation of knowledge in ancient periods will always be highly speculative, but we now have good reason to refute any assertion that this was a "dark age" for culture and learning in the empire.[89] Works from this period have too often been mis-dated and intriguingly, many are the very sorts of works that are the intellectual backbone of the *Chronographia* project:[90]

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86   "Eusebius' *Chronicon* does not appear to have been available in the capital at that time." Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, liv.

87   At some point the *Chronicon* likely stopped being actively copied in the Greek-speaking world, but the rates of manuscript survival always urge caution in making non-survival the basis for a historical conclusion—one only need think of the number of "masterworks" (such as Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De Administrando Imperio* or Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*) which survived the ravages of time via a single copy.

88   "The populace of the Imperial City were much distressed by the new-fangled doctrines [of Leo III's iconoclasm] and meditated an assault upon him. They also killed a few of the emperor's men ... with the result that many of them were punished in the cause of the true faith by mutilation, lashes, banishment, and fines, especially those who were prominent by birth and culture. This led to the extinction of schools and of the pious education, which had lasted from St Constantine the Great until our days but was destroyed, along with many other good things, by this Saracen-minded Leo." MS 559–60 / dB 405. Or see: Cyril A. Mango, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 10, CFHB 13 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990), 52.

89   On the level of learning behind the Isaurian legal reforms see: M. T. G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era: c. 680–850*, OSB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

90   See: Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," especially 278–79 including note 122.

historical chronology,[91] logic,[92] and astronomy.[93] We cannot take the absence of a Greek copy of Eusebius' *Chronicle* as evidence that one did not exist.

Furthermore, the argument from Photios' *Bibliotheka* is not convincing. The *Bibliotheka* is a digest of literature summarizing nearly three hundred works. Despite Photios' statement that these are the works he and his circle read over a specific period, it is often used by Byzantinists to represent the "library" of works available to Photios *in total*.[94] This is thus an argument from silence and can be refuted by the many works the *Bibliotheka* does not mention but which we know exist. One is the *Chronographia* itself.[95] Neither Photius' silence nor the absence of a medieval copy obligate us to believe that there was no copy of Eusebius' *Chronicle* in Constantinople at the turn of the ninth century.

Instead, given the argument above, George the Synkellos' systematic refutation of the chronology of Eusebius' *Chronicle* is a strong indication of the work's ubiquity and popularity into the ninth century. Furthermore, if we

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91 See the rehabilitated chronological work of Stephanus "the Philosopher." Mossman Roueché, "Stephanus the Alexandrian Philosopher, the Kanon and a Seventh-Century Millennium," *Journal of the Warburg and Cortuald Institutes* 74 (2011): 1–30. Contextualizing Roueché's work on this short chronographic table within BAV, *Vat. gr.* 2210 (concerned with chronography in the context of heresiology among other topics) remains to be pursued.

92 The persistence of logical handbooks belies the neglect of education: Mossman Roueché, "A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980): 71–98.

93 See the famous copy of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables*, noting especially the work to redate the manuscript BAV, *Vat. gr.* 1291 to the eighth century by David H. Wright, "The Date of the Vatican Illuminated Handy Tables of Ptolemy and Its Early Additions," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 78 (1985): 355–62. See, for a representative study: Anne Tihon, "Theon of Alexandria and Ptolemy's Handy Tables," in *Ancient Astronomy and Celestial Divination*, ed. N. M. Swerdlow, Dibner Institute Studies in the History of Science and Technology (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 357–70.

94 René Henry, *Photius: Bibliothèque*, vol. 1, *Codices 1–83*, Collection Byzantine (Paris: Société d'édition "Les Belles-Lettres", 1959). And see the translation by John Henry Freese, *The Library of Photius*, vol. 1, Translations of Christian Literature, Greek Texts 2 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920).

95 I have already mentioned the manuscript evidence that the *Chronographia* was certainly being copied, revised, and spread during the very period Photius was writing. The Greek manuscripts BAV, *Vat. gr.* 155 (*V155*) and Christ Church College, *Wake Greek 5* were copied at this time. Furthermore, this is the very period in which Anastasius Bibliothecarius made his Latin translation of the work from a *different* recension (the *Historia Tripartita*; see for instance BAV, *Pal. lat.* 826) indicating the great vitality of a work which, if we relied on the *Bibliotheka* as evidence, we would have to assume was lost. Furthermore, while it is true that Photius mentioned many works of Eusebius and not the *Chronicle*, he also did not mention Eusebius' *Commentary on the Psalms*, his longest work and one we also know was extant at the time.

are willing to attribute the work's eventual disappearance to George's invective, then this disappearance is not evidence of intellectual stagnation but of intellectual debate. The depth of the *Chronographia*'s engagement with Eusebius and the specificity of its citations seal the case that the audience of the *Chronographia* was expected to have read or be able to read the *Chronicle*. George the Synkellos was successful in ending Eusebius' reign for half a millennium as the definitive chronographer and equally as successful in establishing himself as Eusebius' replacement, to the degree that modern scholars have wondered if Eusebius' work was even available in George's milieu. We should no longer allow George's success to obscure our judgment.

4.2   *The* Chronographia*'s "Accurate" Authority over the Past*

The influence of the *Chronographia* can be demonstrated on several grounds. First, the multiple surviving recensions of the text indicate it was quickly perceived to be important. Besides the mid-ninth-century version in *PG 1710*, the *Chronographia* was altered and reissued in Constantinople at the end of the ninth century, the recension surviving in the ninth-century manuscripts *VG 155* and *Wake Greek 5*. Scholars have taken the quire markings in these "sister" manuscripts as evidence of serial, or mass, production.[96] At approximately the same time (ca. 870–873) the work's second half—the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes—was translated into Latin by Anastasius Bibliothecarius for his papal and Carolingian lords, demonstrating international appeal.

Furthermore, the *Chronographia* had an impact on every surviving historical account produced in Byzantium up to the mid-eleventh century. In around AD 870 George Monachos wrote a narrative chronography of the entire history of the world up to AD 842/3.[97] George Monachos' account did not replace the *Chronographia* but depended on it. This dependence is not limited to borrowing narrative material, but extends to adopting the *Chronographia*'s key conceptual term, the "Holy First-Created Day." Thus, even though George Monachos set up his chronography to be a rival account, he bought into the discourse established by George and Theophanes by not only using their historical materials but also the concepts they had created. Pseudo-Symeon Magistros' tenth-century *Chronicle* was similar in concept, a universal chronicle from creation to the present (ending in AD 963). This *Chronicle* does not borrow

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96   Bury, "An Unnoticed Ms. of Theophanes"; Wilson, "A Manuscript of Theophanes in Oxford"; Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium."

97   Karl de Boor and Peter Wirth, eds., *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, BSGRT (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1978).

from the *Chronography* as deeply as had George Monachos, but for the early empire Pseudo-Symeon treated the *Chronographia* as the definitive account by using extensive excerpts. Though both the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Symeon and the *Chronography* of George Monachos sought to supplant the *Chronographia* as the definitive world chronicle for the Roman Empire, they could not, and did not even attempt this without borrowing directly from it.

Three other tenth-century historical works demonstrate the *Chronographia*'s persistence against these rival accounts through their even more explicit indebtedness. The *Chronicle* of Symeon the Logothete (fl. 959–976) was framed as a continuation of the *Chronographia* by restarting from the reign of its final emperor, Leo V in AD 813, and then continuing up to AD 948.[98] Genesios' historical text *On the Reigns of Emperors* was also framed as a continuation of the *Chronographia*, also beginning right where it left off with the reign of Leo V in AD 813.[99] The anonymous chronicle known as the *Chronography of Theophanes Continuatus* (surviving in the single manuscript BAV, *Vat. gr.* 167) yet again continues from where Theophanes left off in AD 813. The work is an even stronger example of the trend of adding to the *Chronographia*, its modern title asserting its explicit continuation of Theophanes.[100]

Thus, all surviving Greek chronicles and histories from the two centuries after the *Chronographia*'s appearance make reference back to that project, either explicitly or implicitly. Its standing had not waned by the eleventh century. John Skylitzes—who wrote that century's most formative historical account—did not seek to usurp the position of George and Theophanes' *Chronographia*, but rather to connect himself to their authority as the definitive

98   This statement is based on the so-called Version A of the *Chronicle* for which the famous "historical compendium" BnF, *Grec* 1711 is an important witness. For discussion see: Staffan Wahlgren, "Symeon the Logothete: Some Philological Remarks," *Byzantion* 71, no. 1 (2001): 251–62. Now see Staffan Wahlgren, ed., *Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon*, vol. 1, CFHB 44 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 118*–19*. For Version B see Immanuel Bekker, ed., *Leonis Grammatici Chronographia*, CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1842).

99   According to A. Kaldellis it seems to have been written in ca. 915–930 and revised around 950. Anthony Kaldellis, *Genesios on the Reigns of the Emperors*, BYZAUS 11 (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998); Anni Lesmueller-Werner and Hans Thurn, *Iosephi Genesii Regum libri quattuor*, CFHB 14 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978).

100   The text has traditionally been discussed as containing six "books," though only the first four of these are noted as such in the one surviving manuscript, *Vat. gr. 167* (s. xi). The first five each give an account of one emperor's reign: Leo V, Michael II, Theophilos, Michael III, and Basil I the Macedonian. For the first four books see: [Jeffrey] Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer, eds., *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, CFHB 53 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015). For the fifth book or *Vita* of Basil I see: Ihor Ševčenko, ed., *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii Imperatoris amplectitur*, CFHB 42 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011).

arbiters of the past. Like the continuations just noted, Skylitzes' history began from Leo v and ran down to his own day in 1057. Skylitzes went even farther than these and praised the accomplishment of George and Theophanes explicitly, his *Preface* a *paean* to the *Chronographia*. The terminology with which Skylitzes argues that his *Synopsis* was the only fitting continuation of George and Theophanes' account even brings us back to the specific terms on which the *Chronographia* supplanted Eusebius' *Chronicle*:

> After the ancient writers, the best compendium of history was written, first by George the monk, the *Synkellos* to the mostly holy patriarch Tarasios, then by Theophanes the confessor, hegoumenos of the monastery of Agros.... After, nobody continued their effort. There *were* those who attempted to do so ... but, because they took their task too lightly (παρέργως ἀψάμενοι τοῦ ἔργου), they all failed to write with the requisite degree of accuracy (ἀκρίβεια).... Each composes his own 'history' and they differ so much from each other in describing the same events that they plunge their audience into dizziness and confusion. For my own part, I took great pleasure in reading the work of the men [first] mentioned above and I hope that [a continuation of their] summary will be of no small benefit to those who love history....[101]

There are several significant aspects of Skylitzes' statements here for my reading the *Chronographia*. First, historians have often wondered why Skylitzes offered such praise of George and Theophanes' project and yet seems to have rejected their format of annual entries. Chapter 1's argument for taking the arrangement of the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* as its original form—as a series of imperial narratives—would remove this difficulty entirely. Second, Skylitzes' reading entirely supports my claim here that Byzantines read the *Chronography* as a single co-authored text, even into the eleventh century.[102] For our present introductory purposes Skylitzes' comments are most useful as evidence for why the work remained authoritative more than two centuries after its

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101   As translated in John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–3.

102   The text of Skylitzes clearly refers to two authors but a single work. In the translation of the text of Skylitzes by John Wortley (provided in the quotation above), "... the best *compendium* of history" and "their *effort*" clearly refer to the work, the *Chronographia*, and are singular nouns. In Greek, this is even more clear. The subject of the verb (ἐπραγματεύσαντο) is plural because it refers to the two authors (George and Theophanes) but its object is singular (τὴν ἐπιτομὴν τῆς ἱστορίας): one single "compendium of history."

composition, and so return our discussion to the *Chronographia*'s own description of its method.

In the passage above, Skylitzes focuses on the idea of "accuracy" (ἀκρίβεια) to cast negative judgment on the historians in the period between himself and Theophanes. We have seen how George the Synkellos' *Chronography* made this concept the key distinction between himself and Eusebius. In chapter 4 we will see that the *Preface* of Theophanes itself asserts "accuracy" (ἀκρίβεια) as not only a key concept of the *Chronography* but the goal and defining characteristic of the joint *Chronographia* project. Skylitzes' use of this term in his own preface would thus seem to be a cue to his reader that Skylitzes has not only read but understood the impetus of the entire project. We have seen that in the context of George's own thought—which Skylitzes here is clearly evoking—ἀκρίβεια does not refer to objectively correct dates so much as to the idea of reliability, of soundness, and of truth. As such the term signifies that the "accuracy" of the work lies not in perfectly correct dates, but in true meaning. By evoking this idea as a concept specifically linked to the *Chronographia*'s approach to the past, Skylitzes is signaling that he knows what it means to compose a reliable or sound account, and that he too will not muddle his readers but will communicate the true meaning of the events and figures whom he portrays. In this way Skylites rested his own claim to an authoritative historical critique of imperial power on the *auctoritas* of George and Theophanes' masterwork, the *Chronographia*.

The long-lasting impact of the *Chronographia* as the definitive historical work for the Middle Byzantine Period was in large part due to its intentional supplanting of the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. However, while Eusebius' "deranged thinking" was the initial intellectual target, the *Chronographia* also accused its contemporary political opponents of turning from sound (ἀκριβής) thinking. This concept was flexible enough to be wielded in opposition to not only Eusebius, or the mid-eighth century heretical iconoclast emperors, but even against the orthodox opponents of George, Theophanes, and their allies. Thus, understanding the *Chronographia*'s attack on Eusebius is the first step in understanding what the *Chronographia* accomplished in its world, and how it did so.

5   The Argument of This Book

This book reconciles the enigmatic view in which modern scholars hold the *Chronographia* with the lofty status of the work in its own Byzantine milieu. Ninth-century readers of the *Chronographia* in both Greek and Latin, and Greek

readers into the tenth and eleventh centuries, saw the work as being one of great erudition, relevance, and significance. Modern scholars do acknowledge the significance of the *Chronographia*, and even do so in glowing terms that at times touch on aspects of its erudition, but even the most positive evaluations have fallen short of explaining the work's incredible impact. The pressing issues of modern scholarship—such as sorting out the authorship question or rationalizing the dating format for use in our own narratives—are important but have not lent themselves to unravelling what made the *Chronographia* a magisterial, definitive masterwork in its own day.[103]

This study brings the form of the work, its material presence in the manuscript codices of the medieval period, into the center of the discussion in order to reset our approach to the contents of the *Chronographia*. My new approach to very well-known texts foregrounds the way an account of all time was actually conveyed to its readers—as a single project with a singular purpose—and by doing so produces an explanation of the ends, or purposes, for which ninth-century Constantinopolitans read their *Chronographia*. This material approach also reveals the presence of the very literary aspects that scholars have accused the work of lacking. Not only does the *Chronographia* situate itself historiographically (as we have already seen), but it possesses an overarching thesis and a new philosophy of historical time. And, not only does the *Chronographia* in fact contain clear and distinct narrative subsections, it also defines connections between those subsections in a manner which builds into a resounding crescendo, an explicit clarion call to its readers in their present political moment. *That* time would end was an impending certainty, even if the exact moment and locus of the ending was unknowable. In the meantime, time always had been, was, and would be possessed of an end in the sense of a meaning. Readers of the *Chronographia* found in the work not only an authoritative account of all past time but a definitive adjudication of time's end as the meaning behind the chronology of the Roman emperors. Accordingly, we find the *Chronographia* completely uninterested in anything resembling apocalyptic prophecies or calculations, and yet deeply invested in making meaning out of the time at hand through the figures of apocalyptic typologies.

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103   It is undeniably difficult to respect a work whose authority rests on insistent claim to an "accurate" chronology when it seems there will be unending confusion over the dating format it employed. For instance: "in spite of the enormous influence it exerted as a narrative source in both East and West, [it] *was not a harbinger of things to come. In its concept it was decidedly old-fashioned.*" Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, liii. Emphasis mine. For the most recent discussion on the question of the work's accuracy with dates see Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics."

The *Chronographia* constructed its new authority upon the very ground it cleared through the project described in this introduction: to dismantle the status of Eusebius' *Chronicle*. On this foundation the *Chronographia* built the end of its promise of "accuracy" into a critique of both orthodox and heretical emperors that would conclude in authoritative judgements about the very nature of imperial rule. Part 1 of the present study systematically sets out the indigenous concepts that made this critique not only coherent but persuasive to ninth-century readers.

Chapter 1 defines the text that the audience would have read. The chapter proposes to set aside the reading practices that modern scholars have imposed through our editions and translations of the *Chronicle* and instead to follow the visual and textual cues in the surviving ninth-century manuscripts (especially *PG 1710*). These cues explicitly directed readers to understand the *Chronographia* as engaging in a discourse about Roman Christian imperial power, with a structure that began the present age from the Roman conquest of Judea and a narrative that made the reigns of emperors into distinct eras.

Chapter 2 defines the author. It interprets the first prefatory lines of the *Chronicle*, which state that a *synkellos* wrote the work. By pursuing a history of the office of *synkellos* into the ninth century, it becomes clear that a contemporary Byzantine would have known this office was not an ecclesiastical position, but the emperor's watchdog in the patriarchate. The work's claim to have been written by an official in a position directly tied to the exercise of imperial power underscores the importance and validity of its criticisms of emperors.

Chapter 3 defines the thesis of the *Chronographia*. The work began with a chronological thesis which it labelled the "First-Created Day." The First-Created Day encapsulated the *Chronographia*'s approach to the relationship between historical Past and experienced Present. It was, at the same time, both the chronological premise of the project and the entire work's ultimate chronological argument. The First-Created Day thesis also conveyed the work's interpretative mode, establishing a typological logic to the interpretation of historical events by building its method for finding the truth of the past around a liturgical conception of time: the paradox of finite participation in the infinite. The interpretative mode of the First-Created Day thesis enjoined readers to pursue the truth about the present and future through the fulfillment of the past types presented in the text.

Concluding part 1 chapter 4 tracks how the *Chronographia* defined the reader who was to do this interpretative work. The *Preface* defined George the Synkellos' continuator, Theophanes the Confessor, as a participatory reader who was obliged to bring about the work's completion in his own present.

The current reader was then invited to continue Theophanes' work in the same manner. Specifically, the *Preface* articulated the promise that anyone who read closely enough to notice what was missing would achieve a present benefit, would make present meaning out of the past. Thus, the *Chronographia* was not framed as a history for passive consumption but as an open-ended *time-writing* that relied upon the reader's collaboration to find the present typified in the past and so bring the First-Created Day to fulfillment.

Part 2 applies the implications of how the *Chronographia* defined its text, author, thesis, and reader to a reading of the entire *Chronicle* as presented in *PG 1710* (excepting where *lacunae* force us to turn to the other ninth-century copies). Having explained how the work expected its contemporary readers to be deeply engaged with making meaning out of its portraits of emperors, the chapters of this section study how the work's program of typological interpretations played out in its imperial histories. The chapter identifies a story that is not laid out in distinct annual entries (as has traditionally been thought), but that utilizes the eras of emperors as narrative units presenting linked images or types of rulers. The *Chronicle* invited the reader to engage in a unique kind of *Kaiserkritik* by making typological interpretations of its portraits of emperors.

Chapter 5 begins laying out this work of typological interpretation by identifying a pattern of interwoven negative types through the *Chronicle*. A series of imperial portraits set up a reader to understand the dynasty of Leo III and Constantine V as the corruption of a Progenitor-Successor type (or the fulfillment of that antitype) first established in its portrait of Constantine I and his son Constantius. Chapter 6 then traces the *Chronicle*'s corresponding positive paradigm for imperial power. From the portraits of the pre-Diocletianic emperors to the reign of Irene (r. 786–802), the *Chronicle* crafted multiple positive imperial types characterized by generosity, the protection of unity, the sharing of power, and above all, repentance. Thus, when it finally reached the complex portrait of the empress Irene, the work concluded that even Irene's flaws and sins should be understood in the terms of a positive imperial type: the emperor who repents. The *Chronicle* offered Irene's generosity as an imperial model for holding off the inevitable judgement of God through her mercy and repentance. Chapter 7 brings these typologies together to argue that they built to the first end, or goal of the entire *Chronographia* project. The successions of rulers and imperial portraits studied thus far constituted a framework to make sense of the present era in which imperial power was usurped by the "Devourer of All" Nikephoros I. The portrait of Nikephoros was the original point, the impetus, towards which the *Chronographia* had been conceived in AD 808–810. The *Chronographia* is thus revealed to be a carefully crafted imperial history, with

relevance to its political present. Part 2 nevertheless leaves us without the necessary conclusion: what was the contemporary reader meant to do with this argument?

The final section, Part 3, considers the multiple ends of the *Chronographia* project which seem to have developed and then shifted in real time as the political landscape in Constantinople changed over the course of AD 808–815. Chapter 8 picks up on the discussion of the first ending which concluded chapter 7. It identifies the faction that would have benefitted from the rhetoric of this ending—written before Nikephoros I was killed in AD 811—as the circle of Arsaber the former *quaestor* of Constantinople. This ending framed the project as a manifesto for revolt to serve the interests of those rebels caught and punished in Arsaber's revolt of AD 808. The second end considered in chapter 8 takes up the argument that the current ending of the *Chronographia*—the entries that cover AM 6303–6305 (AD 811–813)—is in fact a second ending written and added in AD 815. As such this ending reflected a new crossroads for the group that had originally written (or patronized or been supported by) the *Chronographia*—the participants in Arsaber's failed revolt of AD 808. The emperor upon whom the circle of Arsaber had focused the entire polemic of their chronology, the impetus that was Nikephoros I, died in AD 811. But then, just a few years after, another pressing need arose. In AD 813 the socio-political network I associate with the *Chronographia* helped to bring a new emperor to the throne: Leo V (r. 813–820). However, this apparently secure position would quickly dissolve in the reality of imperial power struggles: Leo V chose to consolidate his regime by reinstating the policy of iconoclasm, a policy to which the group behind the *Chronographia* was opposed. These final entries tried to make sense of this complex situation by framing Leo V in a positive light even while warning him of the dangers of trusting iconoclasm to save the empire from military defeats.

Through these chapters my study directly builds on renewed interest in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes in particular,[104] and on a general increase in translations, editions, and studies on early and middle Byzantine historical texts such as: the *Chronicle* of Malalas,[105] the already-mentioned *History* of Nikephoros,[106] the *Chronography* of Theophanes Continuatus,[107] the *Life of Basil* (also known

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104   Jankowiak Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*.

105   Jonas Borsch, Olivier Gengler, and Mischa Meier, eds., *Die Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas im Kontext spätantiker Memorialkultur*, Malalas Studien 3 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019).

106   Marjanović, *Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century Byzantium*.

107   Featherstone and Signes Codoñer, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati*.

as Book v of the same),[108] the *Chronography* of Symeon Magistros,[109] and the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes.[110] At the same time, even given these studies, and even given W. Treadgold's perspicacious work to account for every hypothesized lost text from this period, it is nonetheless difficult to compare the *Chronographia* to historical discourses of previous or subsequent generations of Constantinopolitans.[111] For instance, besides the idiosyncratic and understudied *Chronikon* of George Monachos,[112] our accounts of the ninth-century Amorian dynasty come almost entirely from the historical productions of their successors the Macedonians.[113] The literary ambitions of the Amorian era, taking us up to the last third of the ninth century, seem to have lain primarily elsewhere than in producing histories and historical works that framed and justified their claims to power.[114] Furthermore, the nascent dynasty of the Macedonians certainly took such full advantage of the possibilities of writing the past from the seat of power that their works have literally swallowed those of the previous era.[115]

In the ninth chapter, I provide evidence for how to understand the continued popularity of the *Chronographia* of George and Theophanes in the era when these later works were being produced. In this way I return to the overarching question of this Introduction: what made the *Chronographia* such a compelling work for so many centuries? To answer this question, I turn to the manuscript *PG 1710* itself as a source to propose an answer for the middle of the ninth century. I ask what this manuscript might tell us about the world of mid-ninth-century Constantinople and how the *Chronographia* would have been perceived as still being highly relevant to that milieu. I hypothesize that the recension behind this manuscript was first carefully edited and then re-produced early in the reign of Theodora (r. 842–857/8) in order to fit the work to the context of that era and the specific needs of the empress' network

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108   Ševčenko, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati.*

109   Wahlgren, *Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon.*

110   Wortley, *John Skylitzes.*

111   Warren T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians.*

112   Karl de Boor and Peter Wirth, eds., *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, BSGRT (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1978); Alexander P. Kazhdan and Anthony Cutler, ODB s.v. "George Hamartolos."

113   Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium During the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, BBOS 13 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

114   Prieto Domínguez, *Literary Circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm.*

115   Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," 159–76; Federico Montinaro, "The Chronicle of Theophanes in the Indirect Tradition," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 177–206.

of allies at that time. I argue that by looking to how the *Chronographia* was put to different ends at different times we can explain the staying power of this masterwork of Byzantine chronography, and in the process uncover new evidence for the ways in which ninth-century Constantinopolitans sought to understand and harness the exercise of imperial power.

I conclude my study with a short chapter that asks what this new history of the *Chronographia* contributes to present discourses about the past in cross-disciplinary terms, and in terms of current developments in the work of history-writing in general. Here, however, I want to address this question for a moment in terms of recent scholarly work in my field. Byzantine Studies consistently addresses itself to the task of reading through what C. Mango famously called the "distorting mirror" of Byzantine literature.[116] That is, rather than accepting the traditional label for the period of Byzantine history from ca. AD 726–843 as "Iconoclast," studies on this period now build on re-orienting readings such as L. Brubaker's *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*,[117] or M. Auzépy's description of the ninth century as a "State of Emergency."[118] Three recent publications contribute to this work and in doing so portray the political and ideological stakes in the literary innovations of the late eighth and early ninth centuries with which the present study is concerned. M. Humphreys has recovered a narrative of how the mid-eighth century Isaurian emperors shifted imperial ideology and developed new terms and paradigms that would directly influence all future emperors despite the later *damnatio memoriae* of the entire dynasty.[119] D. Marjanović's focused examination of the *History* of the patriarch Nikephoros I (r. 806–815) explains the argument and narrative strategies of one of the first surviving works to begin actively re-shaping the memory of those Isaurian emperors and thereby to aid our understanding of the historical process of obscuring what Humphreys has worked to recover.[120] Ó. Prieto Dominguez uses the idea of literary circles to fill out how the story

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116   Cyril A Mango, *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the University of Oxford on 21 May 1974* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

117   Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*, SEMH (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012).

118   As Auzépy concluded, "The religious policy of the period has deliberately been left until last, to prevent it eclipsing all other aspects, as so often happens." Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," 278.

119   M. T. G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era: c. 680–850*, OSB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

120   Dragoljub Marjanović, *Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century Byzantium: The Short History of Nikephoros of Constantinople*, CEMS 2 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

continues from where my own will end.[121] It was the battle for control of literature and the literary paradigm in the second quarter the ninth century in particular which made "the veneration of images one of the main identity elements of Byzantine society."[122] Prieto Dominguez' study, in other words, further explains exactly why M. Humphreys had to work so hard to recover the accomplishments of Leo III and Constantine V, and why D. Marjanović's careful rehabilitation of Nikephoros' literary craft is so necessary.

These studies have done much to clarify Byzantine historical discourses in this era across a wide range of genres. Nevertheless, there is still much that is unclear. The present study contributes to this work with a new account of the history of the rhetorics of power between the Isaurian and Amorian dynasties. But rather than presenting that history within the paradigm of the Victory of Orthodoxy—a paradigm that would be imposed on it from the mid-ninth century onwards—I formulate the accomplishment of the *Chronographia* on its own terms, directly from the material traces that remain. I begin this process of recovery by first turning to those very traces, the very same manuscript pages on which ninth-century Constantinopolitans themselves discovered the text of the *Chronographia*.

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121   Óscar Prieto Domínguez, *Literary Circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm: Patrons, Politics and Saints* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

122   Prieto Domínguez, *Literary Circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm*, 437.

PART 1

The Argument of the Chronographia

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Text and Manuscripts: The Imperial Logic of the *Chronographia*

Modern scholars have learned and continue to learn to read the *Chronographia* as a series of atomized, non-unified entries, as a chronological encyclopedia of historical events. This is because our critical editions and translations of the two portions of the *Chronographia* project—the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos and the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes—each present a version of the contents of the *Chronographia* that is defined by the annalistic logic of the *annus mundi* (Year-of-the-World), where every new year is marked by a break and a new entry. As this chapter will explain, ninth-century readers of the *Chronographia* were presented with something very different. My reading of the *Chronographia* uses the two earliest Greek recensions of the *Chronographia* to recover how the work's ninth-century readers encountered its presentation of time. Though these two recensions organized the content in two different ways, the shared premise of their chronological logic is without a doubt the imperial reign, rather than the single-year period which guides the layout of modern critical studies.[1]

Via a survey of the surviving ninth-century manuscripts in the Greek tradition, this chapter demonstrates how their form differs from critical editions and argues for how these differences in form condition readers to take radically different approaches to the text. I present the evidence for these differences in four sections. Section 1 defines the ninth-century form of the text with terminology in alignment with how medieval readers truly encountered the text. Section 2 considers the epoch at which George the Synkellos divided his *Chronographia* project into its two halves (the reign of Herod over Judea in AM 5434 or 63 BC) and explains the significance of this point for readings of the work as compared to the epoch at which modern editors have divided the project (the reign of Diocletian in AM 5777 or AD 284). Section 3 presents the evidence that the layout of the text in the long-neglected

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1 This argument builds directly on the distinct but related hypotheses proposed by Marek Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 54–64 and by Juan Signes-Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 169–76.

mid-ninth-century manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Grec 1710* (*PG 1710*)—a manuscript we now know to be the earliest surviving copy of the *Chronographia*—provides proof that the *Chronographia* originally presented its historical content as a succession of coherent portraits of emperors, not as a series of atomized annual entries. Section 4 explains the reading practices engendered by the different forms of the text and their implications for interpretation. I conclude the chapter by synthesizing these insights from the earliest surviving manuscripts. My manuscript-based reading finds that the *Chronographia* had an entirely different conception of the present era than we have attributed to it, and that in its own milieu the project explicitly presented its account of this present era in a form that invited critique of past and present emperors.

1   The Ninth-Century Form of the *Chronographia*

Early Medieval manuscript codices and modern books all divide the massive chronological project of the *Chronographia* into two parts. But the division of the *Chronographia* into two parts is placed at a different spot depending on whether one is reading early medieval codices or modern editions. Modern scholars divide the project between the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos and the *Chronicle* of Theophanes: that is, according to the purported author. Early medieval copyists did otherwise. Instead of dividing the text by author, ninth-century scribes divided the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos in two and combined its latter half with the entire *Chronicle* of Theophanes.[2] My historicized reading of the *Chronographia* project will begin by describing and explaining this arrangement. My reading will at the same time pursue a means to interpret the explicit statements in the *Preface* of Theophanes that the combined contributions of the two authors were intended to be read as a single chronography.[3] Consequently, to reconstruct the meaning of the *Chronographia* in the ninth century we will first define how its two portions were distinguished, and then determine what it means to read them together.

Modern scholars continue to insist on reading the *Chronography* and the *Chronicle* as two entirely distinct works, despite observations that this is contrary to the medieval practice. As early as 1984 A. Mosshammer explained that

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2   Jesse Torgerson, "From the Many, One? The Shared Manuscripts of the Chronicle of Theophanes and the Chronography of Synkellos," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 93–117.

3   MS 1–2 / dB 3–4. The *Preface* is discussed in full over the course of chapter 4.

the manuscript tradition of George the Synkellos' *Chronography* did not circulate alone but along with the *Chronicle* of Theophanes.[4] Furthermore, brilliant philological work in the 1980s also showed the syntactical mannerisms of George the Synkellos in the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes.[5] Nevertheless none of this has dissuaded scholars in the field from the ingrained habits of modernist methods. Scholars will assert that George the Synkellos actually wrote the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes, but still read George's "proper" portion covering the period AM 1 (the Creation) to AM 5777 (AD 284) as a separate text and so never give a thought to how the *Chronography* informs the portion from Diocletian in AM 5777 (AD 284) to the apparent present, AM 6305 (AD 814). The *Chronographia* project has only ever been studied in two portions, divided between the contributions of the two attributed authors.[6]

As stated above, all surviving manuscript evidence points to a different reality. The *Chronographia* circulated in two parts, but not split between the two attributed authors at Theophanes' beginning in AM 5777.[7] Instead, the *Chronographia* was split into two distinct parts at the sack of Jerusalem by Pompey in AM 5434 (63 BC), well before the end of George's portion. To make my explanation as clear as possible, I need to redefine the titles which scholars

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4   "Mihi tamen uidetur textum Georgii Syncelli ab ipsis temporibus Theophanis in duobus partibus circumagi," Alden A. Mosshammer, ed. *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia*, BSGRT (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1984), xvii; see also the comments of William Adler and Paul Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), lxxvi–lxxvii. As has already been stated, Mosshammer—followed by the *Chronography*'s translators William Adler and Paul Tuffin—suggested that the text was *physically partitioned* in this way. Evidence from the manuscripts led Mosshammer to believe that this preface was neither a happenstance nor a corruption in the tradition: the *Chronography* seemed to have originally circulated in two separate codices.

5   Building on the thesis of Mango in Cyril A. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?" *Zborknik Radova Vizantinoškog Instituta* 18 (1978): 9–18, see the many publications of Paul Speck, especially *Das geteilte Dossier: Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und die seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nikephoros*, Poikila Byzantina 9 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1988). For the most recent studies continuing this productive line of inquiry, see: Filippo Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane': notes paléographiques et codicologiques," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 121–47; and Andrzej Kompa, "Gnesioi Filoi: The Search for George Syncellus' and Theophanes the Confessor's Own Words, and the Authorship of Their Oeuvre," *Studia Ceranea* 5 (2015): 155–230.

6   George the Synkellos: Adler and Tuffin, *Chronography of George Synkellos*; Mosshammer, *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia*. Theophanes the Confessor: Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Karl de Boor, ed., *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883–1885).

7   Torgerson, "From the Many, One?"

have traditionally used for the *Chronographia* project. I have already been using the term **Chronographia** and will continue to do so with both a specific and general meaning. I use *Chronographia* to refer to the entire joint historical project to write the chronography of the universe from AM 1 to AM 6305 (AD 814) in the specific sense of a text that contains all that content. I also use *Chronographia* in the general sense of the title of the work we are discussing, whoever the author of any given portion might be: a medieval reader was told to read the *Chronographia* as a single text. As argued in chapter 2, even when readers knew that Theophanes was in some sense the author of the section they were reading, they were *also* told to think of George the Synkellos as the authorial *auctoritas* of the whole. The combined project was read as a unified work, and we need a single title to express this reality.

I avoid creating neologisms by continuing to use the titles *Chronography* and *Chronicle* to denote the earlier and the latter halves of the *Chronographia*, but I redefine the portion of the text to which these terms refer. As noted in section 2 of the introduction (above), for the remainder of this book, I will use the **Chronography of George the Synkellos** to refer to approximately eighty percent of the work attributed to George the Synkellos: his chronography from the Creation of the World in AM 1 to the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey in AM 5434 (63 BC). So far as we know, in the ninth century this portion must have circulated on its own, perhaps as loose quires.[8] I use the **Chronicle of George and Theophanes** to refer to the remainder of George's *Chronography* covering AM 5434 (63 BC) to AM 5776 (AD 283), *as well as* to the entire text attributed to Theophanes, covering AM 5777 (AD 284) to AM 6305 (AD 813). Thus, for the remainder of this book, the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos covers AM 1 to AM 5434 (or 5492 BC to 63 BC), and the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes covers AM 5434 to AM 6305 (or 63 BC to AD 813).

This redefinition of these standard titles makes it possible to prioritize the form of the text in its medieval manuscripts over the form of the text in our modern editions without inventing a completely new nomenclature.[9] The value of this redefinition is immediately apparent if we turn to the

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8   Torgerson, "From the Many, One?," 98n15.

9   F. Ronconi and I have used *Chronography1* (AM 1–AM 5434) and *Chronography2* (AM 5434– AM 5776) to denote the two portions of the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos. See Torgerson, "From the Many, One?"; Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'" There we noted that *Chronography1* appears to have originally circulated only independently, *Chronography2* appears to have originally circulated only with the *Chronicle* of Theophanes. I revert to traditional titles in the present study to avoid creating unnecessary confusion between this book's argument and all previous studies on the *Chronographia* project of George and Theophanes.

ninth-century manuscripts that are the focus of this chapter.[10] The earliest exemplar of the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France as *Grec* 1710 (*PG 1710*). *PG 1710* is the only exemplar of the first of two surviving ninth-century Greek recensions. It was copied within thirty to sixty years of the original and written in a minuscule script similar to others attributed to the monastery of St. John in Stoudios.[11] *PG 1710* now only contains the *Preface* of Theophanes (f. 2r–v) and the portion of the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes alone (ff. 3v–397v). However, F. Ronconi has recently shown that *PG 1710* was modified after its original production. Not only have we lost the end of the manuscript, but the original codex also contained a text prior to the *Chronicle* and *Preface*, for which there is no other candidate than George the Synkellos' AM 5434–AM 5777.[12] We should therefore think of the hypothetical original codex—of which *PG 1710* is now only a surviving portion—as *PG 1710*ᵃ, a codex which would have originally contained the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes.

The second ninth-century Greek recension survives in two late-ninth-century "sister" manuscripts.[13] The first is housed in the Christ Church College Library at Oxford University as *Wake Greek 5*.[14] The second is housed in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana at the Vatican as *Vat. gr. 155* (*VG 155*). These

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10   In the present study I do not engage with the ninth-century Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius.

11   B. Fonkich took the script to be one of the earliest examples of Studite minuscule, as early as the 830s but more likely from the 840s in Boris L. Fonkich, "Sur la datation et les origines du manuscrit parisien de la 'Chronographie' de Théophane (cod. Paris. gr. 1710)—orig. 1996," in *Grecheskie rukopisi evropeĭskikh sobraniĭ: paleograficheskie i kodikologicheskie issledovaniĭa, 1988–1998 gg.* (Moskva: Indrik, 1999), 58–61. Ronconi, in "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane,'" argues for mid-ninth century by comparing the earliest surviving minuscules (ca. 835) from the monastery of St. John in Stoudios to later manuscripts from that same house (*Moscow Gr. 117* copied in ca. 880 by the hieromonk Athanasius), and work done in Bithynia by the monk Eustace at St. Anne in Chios (*Meteora Metamorph. 591*, copied ca. 861/2).

12   In *PG 1710*, f. 397v cuts out near the end of the entry for AM 6289 (dB 472). See: Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'" A (presumably modern) rebinding also incorrectly re-arranged the final three quires of the manuscript (ff. 382–97). This may be corrected by reading the folios in question in their correct order: ff. 388–95, 396, 382–87, 397. Ronconi, 139.

13   See Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'"

14   For the twentieth-century "discovery" of *Wake Greek 5* see: J. B. Bury, "An Unnoticed Ms. of Theophanes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 14, no. 2 (1905): 612–13; Nigel G. Wilson, "A Manuscript of Theophanes in Oxford," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 357–60; and, Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xcv–xcviii.

manuscripts were produced between 867 and the early tenth century.[15] *VG 155* is a smaller codex of lesser quality than *Wake Greek 5*, but the two are designated "sister" manuscripts because they are from the same recension of the work, and are both written in the hand known as the "tipo anastasio," a hand which has been associated with monasteries outside Constantinople, on the Bithynian side of the Bosporos.[16] *Wake Greek 5* is the superior copy, surviving with very nearly all of its original contents intact. It contains lists of rulers known as the *Chronikon Syntomon* attributed to patriarch Nikephoros I (ff. 1r–11v), the AM 5434–5776 portion from the *Chronography* attributed to George the Synkellos (ff. 12r–61r), and the *Preface* (ff. 61v–62r) and *Chronicle* (ff. 62r–316v) attributed to Theophanes. *VG 155* is missing quires at the beginning and end: it begins partway through George's text (ff. 1r–63v),[17] while the *Chronicle* of Theophanes (ff. 64r–331v) is missing its final 27 years.[18]

The portion of the *Chronographia* that I have labelled the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes is the form of the text exemplified by all surviving ninth-century Greek recensions. *PG 1710*, *Wake Greek 5*, and *VG 155* all originally contained the *Chronicle* as I have now redefined it. Calling this portion of the text by a single title emphasizes that in the ninth century the text of the *Chronographia* was not divided by author but by era.[19]

2   The Structure of the Text: AM 5434 as the Beginning of a New Era

The codices that survive from the ninth century indicate that the *Chronographia* was most often read for the portion which started in AM 5434. What was the significance of this date, that it could define the present historical era?

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15   Juan Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 169, 176.

16   Marco D'Agostino, *La minuscola "tipo Anastasio" dalla scrittura alla decorazione* (Bari: Levante, 1997).

17   Mosshammer, *Georgii Syncelli Ecloga Chronographia*, 361.2.

18   The manuscript ends at the beginning of the entry for AM 6278 (AD 785/6), with de Boor's 461.10.

19   See the chart summarizing what we know of the original contents of the codices that contained the *Chronographia* in Torgerson, "From the Many, One?," 117. Of sixteen surviving manuscripts, thirteen contain the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes (covering AM 5434 to AM 6305). The three that contain another way of splicing the contents of the *Chronographia* show evidence of interventions made to earlier forms of the text. There are no surviving manuscripts that originally preserved the *Chronicle* without adjoining it to either a portion or the whole of the *Chronography*.

Before the entry for AM 5434 the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes began with a short prefatory statement now preserved only at the beginning of *Wake Greek 5*:[20]

> The treatise (that is, chronography), of George, the most devout monk and *synkellos* of Tarasios the most holy archbishop of Constantinople, in the form of an epitome from Julius Caesar's Reign over the Romans, AM 5434, up to the first year of the reign of Diocletian, AM 5777, totaling 343 years.[21]

This statement asserted George the Synkellos' authorship of the *Chronicle* (a point again emphasized in the later *Preface* of Theophanes, on which see chapter 4). This prefatory statement also gives the era covered in the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes its first definition. The *Chronicle* was introduced as the era of the Roman emperors with the *imperium* of Julius Caesar. But while this description of the era is clear enough, the date is unusual because Julius Caesar was still not emperor. The opening event of the year AM 5434 is not Julius Caesar's accession, but the conquest of *Judea* by the Roman general Pompey. By *starting* the *Chronicle* with the year AM 5434 and running the narrative up through the author's present moment of AM 6305 (AD 814), the *Chronicle* made these dates (AM 5434–AM 6305) the definition of the era of the present age, and thus the Roman conquest of Judea its beginning.

This is unusual: no other surviving chronography starts with this event. It has never been explained why the present millennium would begin neither with the rise of the Romans, nor with the birth of Christ, but with the conquest of Judea. The *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes narrates AM 5434 as follows:

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20   This preface would certainly have also originally been at the very beginning of the original codex *VG 155* (which is damaged and so this preface is lost) and *PG 1710* (given the reconstruction by Filippo Ronconi). Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane,'" 143–46.

21   ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΥΛΑΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΥ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΥΓΚΕΛΛΟΥ ΓΕΓΟΝΟΤΟΣ ΤΑΡΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ ΣΥΝΤΑΞΙΣ ΗΤΟΙ ΧΡΟΝΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ ΕΝ ΕΠΙΤΟΜΩΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ ΙΟΥΛΙΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΕΤΟΥΣ ΑΠΟ ΚΤΙΣΕΩΣ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ Ε͞ΥΛ͞Δ ΜΕΧΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ ΔΙΟΚΛΗΤΙΑΝΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΣ Ε͞Ψ͞Ο͞Ζ ΟΜΟΥ ΕΤΗ Τ͞Μ͞Γ. AT 431 / M 360.1–9.

> Pompey, then, upon capturing Jerusalem by siege, took Aristoboulos cap-
> tive along with his sons Alexander and Antigonos and departed for Rome,
> to lead in triumph the kings and leaders of the other nations as well.[22]

Aristoboulos' son Alexander was held captive by Pompey on the way to Rome.
Soon afterwards, Alexander would lead a rebellion:

> Aristoboulos' elder son Alexander escaped from Pompey and arrived in
> Judea. After gaining control over a large body of Jews and even the gov-
> ernment for a short while, he was attacked and ousted by Gabinus and
> Antony.[23]

This narrative describes the rise of Herod the Great, the Idumean, to the throne
of Judea. Herod's accession—through Pompey's crushing of Aristoboulos' son
Alexander's revolt—defines AM 5434.

It is not immediately evident what the reader is meant to make of this
beginning. Why would a chronography leading up to Roman Constantinople
begin with the victories of Pompey rather than with the ascension of Julius
or Augustus Caesar? Or, as chapter 3 will explain, since the *Chronographia*
conceptually built itself around the Incarnation, why begin the present age at
AM 5434 with the ascension of Christ's persecutor Herod, instead of with the
very day of the Incarnation in AM 5500?

The answer is in Pompey's ending of the era of the kingdom of the Jews
by seizing Jewish governance and quelling a subsequent revolt. Through the
period of the Life of Christ, and on through the destruction of Jerusalem by
Titus, the *Chronographia* would repeatedly emphasize that the Herodians
marked a major turning point in history because they initiated "the reign of a
non-Jew over Judea." The entry for AM 5434 initiated the present millennium
with Judea's entrance into the Roman Empire at the beginning of the reign of
Herod. The question remains: why would non-Jewish rule over Judea in 63 BC
establish the beginning of an era whose present culminated in Constantinople
in ca. AD 815?

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22   Translation slightly altered to bring Pompey's name to the front of the sentence, as in
     the Greek text. Πομπήιος οὖν πολιορκίᾳ λαβὼν τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα Ἀριστόβουλον μὲν δέσμιον σὺν
     τοῖς παισὶν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ καὶ Ἀντιγόνῳ κατεῖχεν εἰς Ῥώμην ἀπιών, θριαμβεύσων καὶ ἄλλων ἐθνῶν
     βασιλεῖς καὶ ἡγεμόνας· AT 431 / M 360.10–12.
23   Ἀλέξανδρος υἱὸς Ἀριστοβούλου πρεσβύτερος διαδρὰς τὸν Πομπήιον εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ἔρχεται
     καὶ πρὸς βραχὺ κρατήσας πολλῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρχῆς ὑπὸ Γαβινίου καὶ Ἀντωνίου
     πολεμηθεὶς ἐκβάλλεται. AT 432 / M 360.24–361.1.

First, consider how the *Chronographia* deploys a reading of *Genesis* 49:10 as a prophecy of "the reign of a non-Jew over Judea," which it proceeds to identify in the reign of King Herod. I will consider that text in isolation before demonstrating how George the Synkellos utilized it to define his present era, and to distinguish the era covered by the *Chronography* from that covered by the *Chronicle*. Chapter 49 of the book of Genesis consists of the manifold blessings the patriarch Jacob spoke over his sons. The first verse of the chapter reads: "Then Jacob called for his sons and said: 'Gather round so that I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.'" The prophetic statement that interested George the Synkellos falls in the middle of the statements about Judah. A translation of the Septuagint version reads:

> A ruler shall not fail from Judah,
> nor a prince from his loins,
> until there come the things stored up for him;
> and he is the expectation of nations.[24]

George indicates that he interprets the vague statement in *Genesis* that "… he is the expectation of nations" to refer specifically to the historical person of Christ. The statement "… a ruler shall not fail … *until* …" refers, then, to the reign of the first non-Jew over Judea. This ruler is identified as Herod the Great, a non-Jew since his father was the Idumean Aretas, and his mother the "Arab" Kypris (or, Cypros). Herod's termination of "rule" over Judah by Judeans signals the preparation of the way for the Messiah. In this way the second, final era of world history—the present age—is initiated by the fulfillment of a prophecy about control over Judea.

This interpretation and its implications are discussed a half-dozen times by George the Synkellos as he narrates the period. The idea is no passing aside: when introducing the idea he uses a direct authorial voice, explicitly emphasizing the centrality of this point to the entire chronographic project:

> Although the preparation of this material has not been an easy task for me, I wished to show how, when the divine incarnation of the only-begotten Son and Word of God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, was imminent,

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24   οὐκ ἐκλείψει ἄρχων ἐξ Ἰούδα καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, ἕως ἐὰν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, καὶ αὐτὸς προσδοκία ἐθνῶν. Genesis 49:10 LXX. Contrast the Hebrew text: "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his."

a leader from Judah and a ruler from his loins had ceased, in accordance with the prediction of the patriarch Jacob.[25]

What did George gain by using the *event* of *this* prophecy's apparent fulfillment to "show how" this happened with Christ imminent and argue that this characterized the present?

The answer is a specific historical definition of the Roman empire. The text explicitly communicates its idea of the beginning of empire by associating the reign of a non-Jew over Judea with the ascent of Pompey to *imperator* after "[Pompey] made the Jews tributary to the Romans."[26]

> After arriving in Rome and leading the procession celebrating his many victories [i.e., in Judea], Pompey was publicly proclaimed *Imperator* and joined in an alliance of friendship with Gaius Julius Caesar, becoming his son-in-law through his daughter Julia.

The chronological impact of the messiah did not *only* center on the moment of the Incarnation, but was also intimately tied to a political praxis, the exercise of Roman rule over Judea through the reign of Herod. The prophecy derived from *Genesis* 49:10—which is not marked as a major historiographical turning point in other world histories either medieval or modern—would seem to be key to discovering the narrative goals of the *Chronographia*. Rule over Judea by a non-Jew under the Romans initiated the coming of the *Christos*— the anointed one of God—and began the present millennium, not only in the sense of the millennium of Christ and his Church, but the millennium of the universal rule of the Roman Empire, the rule of the *imperatores* and βασιλεῖς. This is the significance of the original division of the *Chronographia* project at AM 5434.

3   Time's Order: A Chronology of Emperors or of Universal Years?

As we will see, the dating system in all early manuscripts also framed time as Roman and imperial. Specifically, the chronologies in these manuscripts were presented in a way that made the reigns of the emperors fully dominant over the chronological structure. This dominance can only be seen by carefully comparing the differences between the presentation of the text in its

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25   AT 433 / M 362. See Genesis 49:10 LXX.
26   AT 432 / M 360.

ninth-century manuscripts, in K. de Boor's critical edition of 1883, and in C. Mango and R. Scott's critical translation of 1997. Modern critical studies have preferred post-ninth-century layouts of the *Chronographia*. These later versions break up the text's narrative sections into single annual units which rely on the *annus mundi* (Year-of-the-World) system of universal years.[27] It is clear that in making this choice modern editors have sought to equip their audience to read the *Chronographia* without becoming chronologically disoriented.

The modern approach to editing the *Chronographia* derives from ideas about medieval chronicling in general. Scholars tend to assume that medieval chronographers began with something like an "empty" list of Years of the World, and then went about filling in those years with content derived from narrative texts of all sorts (histories, chronicles, and also sermons, hagiographies, and other genres).[28] This was, for instance, the basis of H. White's insights about narrativity drawn from his reading of a version of the *Annals of St. Gall* in the field-shaping article "The Value of Narrativity."[29] Despite the value of White's conclusions we must resist assuming that this is the only way chronographers worked, especially in the face of evidence to the contrary. R. McKitterick made the strength of that evidence quite clear for Carolingian chronicles, insisting that:

> Rather than thinking of the annal entries [of the *Royal Frankish Annals*] as year-by-year jottings, they should be recognised as a skillfully constructed and highly selective portrayal of the careers of the Carolingian rulers whose fortune and success is identified with that of the Frankish people.[30]

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27 Marek Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 54–64. See also Roger D. Scott, "The First Half of Theophanes' Chronicle," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 241.

28 Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*. "In terms of structure, the work of Theophanes rests on a chronological armature that combines the data of both secular and ecclesiastical history, precisely anchored with regard to an absolute computation, namely the annus mundi." (p. lii) In Mango and Scott's "Introduction," descriptions of the text as a file box are dominant. The *Chronographia* was "a boxful of loose papers" (lxii) or "a file of the sources" (lxxiv and xci) put together as "a dossier of extracts from earlier witnesses" (p. xcv), even "a scissors and paste job." (lv)

29 Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 10–13.

30 Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 102.

Scholarship on the *Chronographia* has yet to have this realization. Both the critical edition of 1883 by K. de Boor, and the critical translation of 1997 by C. Mango and R. Scott give absolute priority to the dating system of the *annus mundi*, the "Year-of-the-World." However, it is now possible to read the earliest manuscripts of the *Chronographia* as showing that the chronographers used the successions of emperors to establish their foundational chronological framework, and that the *anni mundi* were either added after composition, or during a later stage of re-editing.

The early manuscripts of the *Chronographia* arrange the text around the reigns of emperors in two different ways. In both ways the text does not simply follow the steady march of "universal" years but is broken up into the reigns of each emperor. I will first consider the evidence of the late-ninth century Greek copy, *Wake Greek 5*. This manuscript's arrangement provided an entry and a date for every year and so would seem to support the idea that the *Chronographia* was composed out of a list of years. However, it dates each of its entries by the year of an emperor's reign—the current Roman Emperor for that year—but only occasionally with an *annus mundi*, the universal Year-of-the-World. We will examine later how *Wake Greek 5* provided a date for each passing year, but for now what is significant is that it did *not* use the *annus mundi* to do so. A comparison of the entries in *Wake Greek 5* and *PG 1710* annotated with an AM date is in table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1　　Comparison of annus mundi dates in PG 1710 and Wake Greek 5[a]

PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5
5777	5777	5926	5926		6023		6118
5788	5788	5931	5931		6024	6121	6121
5797	5797	5937	5937		6025	6122	6122
5803	5803	5940	5940		6026		6123
5805 (= 5810)	5810	5843*	5943		6027		6124
5815	5815		5944		6028	6126	6126
5816	5816	5945	5945	6029	6029	6127	6127
5817	5817	5950	5950	6032	6032	6130	6130
5818	5818	5956	5956	6036	6036	6134	6134
5824 (= 5823)	5823	5958	5958	6046 (= 6042)	6042	6139	6139
5827	5827	5964	5964	6047 (= 6048)	6047		6144

TABLE 1.1 Comparison of annus mundi dates in PG 1710 and Wake Greek 5 (*cont.*)

PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5	PG 1710	Wake Gr. 5
5829	5829	5965	5965		6048	6162	6162
5831	5831	5967	5967	6050	6050	6169	6169
5834	5834		5968	6051	6051		6170
5835 (= 5839)	5839		5971	6054	6054		6172
5847	5847	5977	5977	6056	6056	6173	6173
5850	5850		5980	6058	6058	6178	6178
5854 (= 5853)	5853	5982	5982	6065	6065		6180
5855	5855	5983	5983	6067	6067	6181	6181
5856	5856	5984	5984	6071	6071	6186	6186
5857	5857	5988	5988	6075	6075		6190
5861	5861	5992	5992		6079	6191	6191
5866	5866	5997 (= 5996)	5996	6080	6080	6197	6197
5868	5868		5998	6081	6081	6200	6200
5870	5870		5999	6082	6082	6204	6204
	5871		6000	6090	6090	6206	6206
5873 (= 5874)	5874	6001	6001	6092	6092	6208	6208
5883	5883	6005	6005	6093	6093	6209	6209
5885	5885	6006	6006	6094	6094		6210
5890	5890		6008	6095	6095	6212	6212
	5896	6011	6011	6099	6099	6233	6233
5901	5901		6012	(*LACUNA*)	6100	6236	6236
	5906	6017	6017	(*LACUNA*)	6102	6268	6268
	5912		6019	(*LACUNA*)	6103	6273	6273
5917*	5917	6020	6020	(*LACUNA*)	6111	6283	6283
5919	5919		6021	(*LACUNA*)	6114	(*LACUNA*)	6304
	5923	6026 (= 6022)	6022		6116		

a Grey shading highlights instances where an AM date is present in *Wake Greek 5* but *not* in *PG 1710*. Where XXXX (= YYYY) appears in the *PG 1710* column, this indicates *PG 1710* AM XXXX and *Wake Greek* AM YYYY have equivalent contents though the AM number in the manuscript is different;

* denotes a corrected scribal error.

These four double columns show which entries are marked by an *annus mundi* in *PG 1710* (left) and in *Wake Greek 5* (right). The collation raises many issues. For our present purposes the point is the shared characteristic of the two early Greek recensions: both only *irregularly* supply the reader with an *annus mundi* date.[31] Out of the 529 total entries in *Wake Greek 5* (with one entry for each year covered), only 147 (or 27.8%) were introduced with an *annus mundi* (as above). The rest were organized by a system of annotating dates that used the year of the current emperor as its grounding principle.

The recension represented by *PG 1710* is different in many respects. First, unlike *Wake Greek 5*, *PG 1710* did not provide any date for its other entries. Out of a total of 347 unique entries in *PG 1710* (182 years have no unique entry), only 113—32.6%—begin with an *annus mundi* date (as above, *Wake Greek 5* itself has only 147).[32] Given the patchy annotation of universal years in *PG 1710*, it is impossible for a reader to systematically track exactly what year they are reading about at any given moment (as *Wake Greek 5* seemed to expect of its reader). The chronological structure of *PG 1710* thus cannot be described as an annual chronology. In fact, the great majority (231) of the entries in *PG 1710* begin with the formulaic phrase "Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει …" ("In this [unspecified] year …").[33] That is, all of these entries are actually undated.

At first this might be taken to mean that readers of *PG 1710* would rely on the sporadic *annus mundi* (Year-of-the-World) annotations to keep track of where they are in time. Instead, as J.-Signes Codoñer has shown, the manuscript provided structure to the text of the *Chronographia* via headings in the top margin. These proclaimed the beginning of the reign of each emperor.[34] Clearly, the system that *PG 1710* used to organize its content for its readers derives from the succession of the reigns of the emperors and not from a list of universal years.

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31   Perhaps most immediately striking is the increased density of the *annus mundi* in *Wake Greek 5*, especially between the years AM 5996 and AM 6029 where an *annus mundi* date for nearly every year is completely out of character for the rest of the *Chronographia*.

32   This count is a maximum possible number, based on supplying an AM date for the entries where there is a lacuna in *PG 1710*. See these noted in table 1.1.

33   There are three exceptions. The fourteenth year of Justinian I begins: "In the fourteenth year of Justinian." The twenty-fourth year of Leo III begins "In the twenty-third year of Leo …". The other exception is what would be AM 6216, which begins "Coming now …" and is quite certainly a later intervention into the text.

34   Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," 170–71 pointed out that *PG 1710* provided a structure with headings in the top margin at the beginning of the reign of each emperor.

4   How the Dating Systems Work in Practice

The comparative discussion that follows focuses on how different versions (medieval and modern) present the reign of Diocletian—the beginning of the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes.[35] In this comparison I seek to disclose what has been obscured or imposed by the modern layouts of the *Chronographia* and in doing so, to orient my reader to the unique experience of reading the *Chronographia* via the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710*. My method is to describe what sort of participation these different dating schemes demand from readers. I first establish the three different reading experiences in *Wake Greek 5*, in K. de Boor's critical edition, and in C. Mango and R. Scott's translation. Having concluded this analysis, I then move on to compare all of these to *PG 1710* and determine which of the three approaches is most similar to this early manuscript.

4.1   *The Dating Systems of* Wake Greek 5, *de Boor, and Mango & Scott*

In this section I compare the dating systems of the *Chronicle* as presented in the late ninth-century manuscript *Wake Greek 5*, K. de Boor's 1883 critical edition, and C. Mango and R. Scott's 1997 critical translation. To make this comparison I analyze how each version presents the first four years of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes: the beginning of the reign of Diocletian from AM 5777 (AD 284/5)—AM 5780 (AD 287/8).

In *Wake Greek 5*, the reign of Diocletian begins at the bottom of folio 62r, initiated by the following chart of eight small columns (figure 1.1). I give an English translation of this content which maintains the substance of the visual layout of this organizational system in *Wake Greek 5* in table 1.2.[36]

This series of columns, each with a unique piece of dating information, is one of the so-called "dating rubrics" in the *Chronicle* manuscripts: a series of eight narrow columns, each column devoted to an independent count of "years".

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35   The account of Diocletian's reign begins of the portion of the *Chronographia* attributed to Theophanes and is also the earliest portion of the *Chronographia* after the now-lost first quires of the manuscript *PG 1710*.

36   Note that, for reasons that remain unclear, the scribe has counted two of Diocletian's years here ("1, 2"). Like K. de Boor, I take this as an oversight, and I supply the third to match the count for all other rulers.
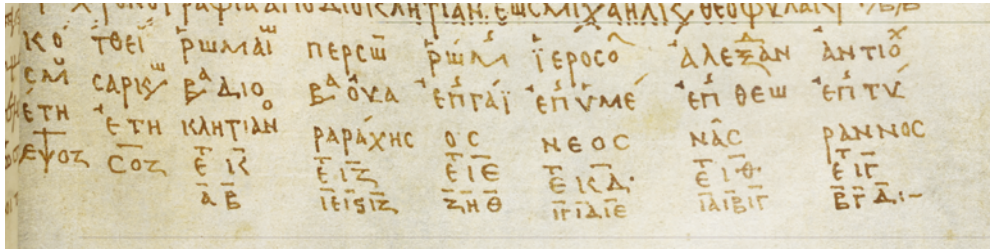
FIGURE 1.1   Oxford, Christ Church College, Wake Greek 5, f. 62r bottom
IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRIST CHURCH LIBRARY AND COPYRIGHT OF THE GOVERNING
BODY OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

TABLE 1.2   Translation of dating rubric on Oxford, Christ Church College, Wake Greek 5, f. 62r bottom[a]

Year of World	Year of Incarnation	Roman Emp Diocletian	Persian Emp Ouararaches	Bp Rome Gaios	Bp Jerusalem Hymeneos	Bp Alexandria Theonas	Bp Antioch Tyrranos
(AM)	(AD)	20 years	17 years	15 years	24 years	19 years	13 years
5777	277	[year] 1, 2, [3]	[year] 15, 16, 17	[year] 7, 8, 9	[year] 13, 14, 15	[year] 11, 12, 13	[year] 2, 3, 4

a   Emp = Emperor; Bp = Bishop

In *Wake Greek 5* and other manuscripts, this format is the most complete or "full" form of the dating rubrics. The full dating rubric above includes (from left to right) two universal counting systems—Year of the World ("AM") and Year of the Incarnation ("AD")—and six local counting systems: the years in power of two emperors (Roman and Persian) and four bishops (of Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch). Later on in the *Chronographia*, a fifth bishop—of Constantinople—would be added, which would bring the total number of columns for these full dating rubrics up to nine. These rubrics clearly labelled the current rulers—two emperors and four (or five) bishops—and established the relative order of each of them, from left to right. It is, as a whole, an incredible feat of historical synchronization, comparable in concept to the fourth-century *Chronological Canons* of Eusebius of Caesarea.

This information does not always appear in exactly this form: these full rubrics are not the only way that *Wake Greek 5* dates each of its entries for at other times the same information might be presented in an "abbreviated" form. The full rubric just depicted (on folio 62r) covered the first three years of
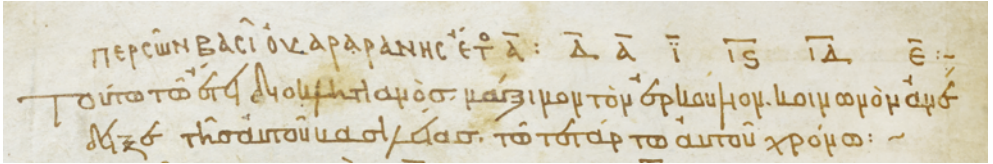
FIGURE 1.2   Oxford, Christ Church College, Wake Greek 5, f. 62v top
IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRIST CHURCH LIBRARY AND COPYRIGHT OF THE GOVERNING
BODY OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

the *Chronographia* in a single chart (table 1.2). If we turn over the page to the top of folio 62v we find an example of an "abbreviated" dating rubric for the fourth overall year covered by this portion of the *Chronographia* (figure 1.2). I give my English translation, again using the same visual layout as *Wake Greek 5*, in figure 1.3.

EMPEROR OF THE PERSIANS, OUARARANES' FIRST YEAR: 4   1   10   16   14   5

I n this year Diocletian appointed Maximianus Herculius an equal of his rule, in his fourth year.

FIGURE 1.3   Translation of dating rubric on Oxford, Christ Church College, *Wake Greek 5*,
f. 62v top

Moving from Byzantine Greek to Modern English is not the only act of translation that this passage demands. The series of numbers following the announcement of a new ruler of the Persians, Ouararanes (usually latinized as Vararanes) combines with one of the abbreviated dating rubrics mentioned above.

The abbreviated dating rubric here is a series of numbers: 4-1-10-16-14-5. To make sense, each of these has to be interpreted or de-coded by the reader. The reader must first be aware that these numbers refer to the number of years that any ruler has been in power. The reader must also be aware of the order of the rulers (which the reader learned from the full dating rubric on the previous folio). Finally, the reader must remember which individual ruler is reigning over each realm (which the reader also learned from the previous folio). It is only with all of this in mind that a fully attentive reader would be able to understand that the "4" that begins this series of numbers here refers to (1) the fourth year of someone's reign; (2) the reign of a Roman emperor (since the number is the first in the series); and, (3) that the Roman emperor at this time is Diocletian. The attentive reader would then move on, performing the same work of memory on the second number in the series, determining that the "1"

would refer to the first year in the reign of a new Persian Emperor, whose identity was revealed by the note in majuscule capital script: "EMPEROR OF THE PERSIANS, OUARARANES' FIRST YEAR".[37]

It is worth reflecting on how this system worked in practice. To know the date of the entry, the reader would have to remember to which realm each number referred, as well as which ruler held power in that realm at that time. The manuscript *Wake Greek 5* was written in a way that forced the reader to use the first "full" dating rubric (f. 61r) to memorize each ruler and the order of their appointments relative to other rulers before they could follow the injunction of the *Preface* of Theophanes: to "be able to *know* in which year of what emperor what event took place."[38] Practically, this means that from the top of f. 61v the manuscript takes for granted that the reader will recollect the rulers who remain in power in order to understand that the first number (4) in the series (4-1-10-16-14-5) refers back to the first ruler noted in the full dating rubric: the Roman Emperor Diocletian. The reading practice demanded by the layout of the manuscript presumes a reader willing to engage in acts of memory and deduction to know the year of an event.

The ostensible goal of both a critical edition and translation is to present a version of the "original" text as preserved in its most representative manuscripts. However, the reality is that a critical edition and translation also need to make it possible for a modern audience to visually and conceptually process what they are seeing. In the case of the edition and translation of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, we can see how the latter goal was prioritized, resulting in significant changes to the presentation of the text.

First, compare what we have just seen from ff. 62r–62v in *Wake Greek 5* to K. de Boor's re-presentation and layout of these same years, AD 5777–5779:

A.M. 5777	Κόσμου ἔτη ͵εψοζ´.	Τῆς θείας σαρκώσεως ἔτη ͵σοζ´.	Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς Διοκλητιανὸς ἔτη κ´. α´.	Περσῶν βασιλεὺς Οὐαρράχης ἔτη ιζ´. ιε´.
	Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπος κθ´ Γάϊος ἔτη ιε´. ζ´.	Ἱεροσολύμων ἐπίσκοπος κη´ Ὑμέναιος ἔτη κδ´. ιγ´.	Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπος ιϛ´ Θεωνᾶς ἔτη ιθ´. ια´	Ἀντιοχείας ἐπίσκοπος ιθ´ Τύραννος ἔτη ιγ´. β´.

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37   And the "10" is the Bishop of Rome, Gaios' tenth, and so on.

38   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 2. My emphasis.

| A.M. 5778 | β'. | ιϛ'. | η'. | ιδ'. | ιβ'. | γ'. |
| A.M. 5779 | γ'. | ιζ'. | θ'. | ιε'. | ιγ'. | δ'. |

Below is an English version of this text which maintains de Boor's layout:

Year of World (AM) 5777	Year of World (AM) 5777	Year of Incarnation (AI) 277	Roman Emperor Diocletian 20 years [year] 1	Persian Emperor Ouararaches 17 years [year] 15
	29th Bishop of Rome Gaios 15 years [year] 7	28th Bishop of Jerusalem Hymeneos 24 years [year] 13	16th Bishop of Alexandria Theonas 19 years [year] 11	19th Bishop of Antioch Tyrranos 13 years [year] 2
Year of World (AM) 5778		2 16 8 14 12 3		
Year of World (AM) 5779		3 17 9 15 13 4		

Guided by manuscripts other than *Wake Greek 5*, de Boor displayed the three years which had been crammed into one dating rubric in the codex *Wake Greek 5* in three distinct dating rubrics. Having made that decision, the graphic limitations of modern printing presses made de Boor split AM 5777's neat single-row of eight columns into two rows of four columns each. This decision makes the dating rubric difficult to read: it is a paragraph, rather than a single series of equal columns.

Most significantly, K. de Boor then added content to make it possible for his modern readers to follow, without performing the intense memory work that the manuscripts required. De Boor added a running series of *annus mundi* (Year-of-the-World) dates in the column justified to the farthest left by noting, as here, "AM 5777," "AM 5778," and "AM 5779." No early manuscript gives a separate notice like this to reinforce the dominance of the *annus mundi* tally. In other words, beyond his decisions about how to translate medieval Greek into the standardized Greek of the critical edition, de Boor's choices in how to reformat medieval manuscripts to a printed page made it seem as if the logic of the *Chronographia* depended on a continuous universal dating system *even though one does not appear in the manuscripts*. The invention of these continuous *annus mundi* dates has led modern scholars to believe that the *Chronographia* cannot be read without them, and that these *annus mundi* dates constitute the backbone of its composition.

Furthermore, the clarification of the added *annus mundi* allows us to ignore the act of interpretation which the manuscripts required, and which we described above. The series of numbers that K. de Boor provides as the dating rubric of AM 5778 (where we find the numbers 2-16-8-14-12-3) and 5779 (where we find the numbers 3-17-9-15-13-4) is a series of numbers which the medieval scribe forced the reader to interpret for themselves. But, because of the addition of his *annus mundi* dates, de Boor makes it possible for the modern reader to ignore the challenge of interpretation that would have confronted the medieval reader, never having to confront the question of what this series of numbers meant.

The third item in our comparison brings us to the format and appearance of the *Chronographia* in the modern English critical translation by C. Mango and R. Scott. Unlike K. de Boor, Mango and Scott made a notation to convey when they had imposed a universal year date by placing de Boor's invented Year-of-the-World dates (as well as their own supplied "AD" date), between square brackets. For an attentive modern reader, this at least clarifies the editorial intervention that was imposed on the medieval evidence.

On the other hand, C. Mango and M. Scott's translation completely reorients the graphic presentation that is found in the manuscripts: the entire logic of reading the dating rubric for any entry becomes vertical rather than horizontal:

> AM 5777 [AD 284/5]
> Year of the divine Incarnation 277
> Diocletian, emperor of the Romans (20 years), 1st year
> Varraches, emperor of the Persians (17 years), 15th year
> Gaius, 29th bishop of Rome (15 years), 7th year
> Hymenaios, 28th bishop of Jerusalem (24 years), 13th year
> Theonas, 16th bishop of Alexandria (19 years), 11th year
> Tyrannos, 19th bishop of Antioch (13 years), 2nd year
>
> [AM 5778, AD 285/6]
> Diocletian, 2nd year
> Varraches, 16th year
> Gaius, 8th year
> Hymenaios, 14th year
> Theonas, 12th year
> Tyrannos, 3rd year

[AM 5779, AD 286/7]
Diocletian, 3rd year
Varraches, 17th year
Gaius, 9th year
Hymenaios, 15th year
Theonas, 13th year
Tyrannos, 4th year[39]

Furthermore, the translation by C. Mango and R. Scott makes its own major intervention by completely removing any need for the reader to exercise memory or deduction. Mango and Scott expanded and explained the series of numbers that are the abbreviated dating rubrics (which K. de Boor had at least left in the form found in the manuscripts) by giving the names of the rulers that each number refers to. Mango and Scott do not put these items into square brackets, and so the edition obscures the fact that the vertically listed entries are an extrapolation from what was originally merely a numeric sequence.

By translating the abbreviated dating rubrics, by telling the modern reader what 2-16-8-14-12-3 *meant* (to repeat the example of the *Chronographia*'s entry for AM 5778), C. Mango and R. Scott removed the effort required to read historical time in the manuscript *Wake Greek 5*. Outside of the context of the manuscript of the *Chronographia*, the series 2-16-8-14-12-3 means nothing at all. Within the context of the manuscript, this series of numbers is a coherent annotation of a specific year. The reader of the translation does not have to use their active memory to continually re-construct time's sequence and the leaders of the world out of an otherwise unintelligible and meaningless series of numbers. In sum, Mango and Scott expand and interpret when they translate the dating content for their contemporary reader. Mango and Scott's editorial interpretation makes it possible for a twenty-first century reader to follow along, but anyone not familiar with the manuscripts of the *Chronographia* will not realize that the translation obscures the work the medieval manuscripts forced the reader to do in order to understand time.

To conclude our comparison of *Wake Greek 5* with the critical edition and translation, I turn now to the fourth year denoted in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes. We have already seen how *Wake Greek 5* presented this year: an abbreviated dating rubric conveyed that this was the fourth year of the Roman emperor Diocletian, the first year of the Persian Emperor Vararanes, and so

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39   MS 5 / db 6.

on. In other words, we have already seen that *Wake Greek 5* did not present its entry for that year within the framework of universal years at all.

By contrast, both the critical edition and the critical translation (as below) identify this entry as the entry for AM 5780. Here is K. de Boor's rendering of AM 5780:

A.M. 5780.   *Περσῶν βασιλεὺς Οὐαραράνης ἔτος α΄.*

                                          δ΄. α΄. ι΄. ιϛ΄. ιδ΄. ε΄.

                          Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει Διοκλητιανὸς Μαξιμιανὸν τὸν Ἑρκούλιον κοινω-
                   νὸν ἀνέδειξε τῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλείας τῷ τετάρτῳ αὐτοῦ χρόνῳ

Below, for reference, is a translation (via Mango and Scott) of de Boor's version:

A.M. 5780.   Emperor of the Persians Ouararanes, Year 1

                                          4   1   10   16   14   5

                          In this year Diocletian appointed Maximianus Herculius
                   as partner in his rule, it being his fourth year.

Here is C. Mango and R. Scott's rendering of AM 5780 (with notational marks removed):

   [AM 5780, AD 287/8]
   Diocletian, 4th year
   Vararanes, emperor of the Persians (1 year), 1st year
   Gaius, 10th year
   Hymenaios, 16th year
   Theonas, 14th year
   Tyrannos, 5th year
   In this year Diocletian appointed Maximianus Herculius as partner
   in his rule, it being his fourth year.

In the manuscript *Wake Greek 5* the label "5780" does not appear at all for this entry, and there is no list of the names of rulers. The idea of the *annus mundi* would at most be passive in the memory of the medieval reader. On the other hand, the names of emperors and bishops were not given to the readers (as in Mango and Scott's translation, above). Instead, the reader needed to use their active memory to recall who was the Roman emperor, and so follow the count of the years of that emperor's reign. The reader of *Wake Greek 5* is not told that "4" at the beginning of the number series (for instance) referred to the year of

the reign of the current Roman emperor but needed to supply the context to deduce that the emperor at this point in the *Chronographia* was Diocletian.

To read a medieval chronicle is to conceptually enter its dating system. The means by which the manuscripts of the *Chronographia* (using *Wake Greek 5* as our example) presented their chronology, their system of years, is unusual even within the scope of medieval chronicles. To render this medieval chronography legible to a modern readership, K. de Boor, C. Mango, and R. Scott made a series of entirely reasonable editorial decisions. Nonetheless, these decisions have governed the ways in which scholars read and study the text and so have fundamentally impacted study of the *Chronographia*. Our analysis of just the first four years of the reign of Diocletian clarifies the contrast between reading the *Chronographia* in its earliest manuscripts, and the source-critical approach that scholars have relied on until now.

The apparent similarity between the chronological systems of *Wake Greek 5* and the modern edition and translation is superficial. All three systems provide a notation of some kind for every passing year. On the other hand, the modern edition and translation remove the labor which the medieval manuscript required of its readers. Even more significantly, in making the text coherent to their readers, the modern edition and translation altered the very chronology of the *Chronographia* by supplying a universal year for every single entry when in fact the medieval manuscripts only supplied such a year for a percentage of their entries. This alteration has the effect of changing the basic dating system from one built on the reigns of emperors, into one built on the universal year.

The experience of reading the *Chronographia* in *Wake Greek 5* required active participation and memory work on the part of the reader, an experience obscured by the modern editions. The *Chronographia* in *Wake Greek 5* demanded the reader labor to "date" historical information by making them work to memorize successions of notable rulers: the chronology of rulers' successions only worked if a reader actively memorized those successions. As we will see when turning to *PG 1710*, this contrast between active and passive reading experiences is also a contrast between two different ways of conceiving chronology.

4.2   *The Dating System of* PG 1710

The comparisons above indicated that the *Chronographia* was originally organized by regnal years rather than by universal years. By contrast, *PG 1710* contains a version of the *Chronographia* which is unique in form and in historical-chronological content from all other versions discussed above. In the manuscript *PG 1710* we find a version of the *Chronographia* which contains
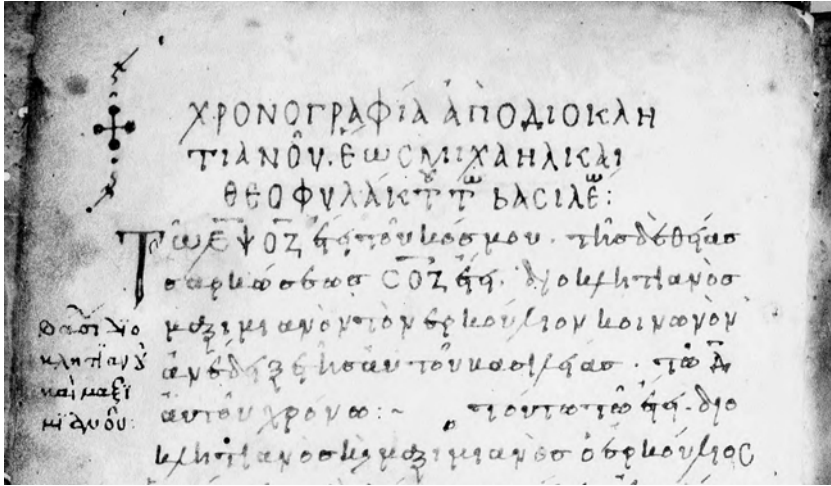
FIGURE 1.4   Paris, BnF Grec 1710, f. 3v top, image courtesy of Gallica

none of the dating rubrics discussed above, and which was not organized by regnal years but by entire reigns.[40]

The *Chronographia* in *PG 1710* has no year entries without text content. For this reason, *PG 1710* does not have distinct notations of AM 5777–5779 (as above) but begins with the text that these other versions place under AM 5780, the notice concerning Diocletian's appointment of Maximianus Herculius (figure 1.4). The English translation in figure 1.5 is, once again, a version that maintains the layout of the text in the manuscript, including the note in the left margin.

Like the three versions we have already seen, the first entry in *PG 1710* is labelled AM 5777, but under this label it records the content which we saw placed under AM 5780 in the critical edition and translation, and under "Diocletian 4" in *Wake Greek 5*.

The difference in format in *PG 1710* result in the reader being given different information. First, we must recognize not only a contrast in dates between the different versions, but a contrast in the manner of dating. In *PG 1710* this first entry is dated, but the second is not. It begins (still in the above image) on the same line after a colon and a tilde with the phrase "In this year (Τούτῳ τῷ

40   Given the caveat, above, that it has been damaged and no longer contains the whole portion of the *Chronographia* that I labelled the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes. According to the analysis of Filippo Ronconi, at some point the portion of the *Chronicle* attributed to George the Synkellos was removed and only the portion of the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes now remains. Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane,'" 138–146.

CHRONOGRAPHIA FROM DIOCLE-
TIAN TO THE REIGN OF MICHAEL
AND THEOPHYLACT

REIGNS OF
DIOCLETIAN &
MAXIMIANUS

In the year 5777 of the World, and the year of the Incarnation 277: Diocletian appointed Maximianus Herculius an equal of his reign in the fourth year of his [reign]: ~   In this year Diocletian...

FIGURE 1.5   Translation of text in Paris, BnF Grec 1710, f. 3v top

ἔτει) Diocletian....” This generates a sense of narrative continuity, and possibly even sustains chronological ambiguity: one could read the final phrase of the first entry as the beginning of the second: “In his fourth year: ~ in this year, Diocletian....” Regardless, this second entry is—strictly speaking—undated.

A reader seeking to supply the undated entry with a date faces an impossible task, for the next entry is dated AM 5788 and there are only four entries in between AM 5777 and AM 5788, all of which are labelled “Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει (In this year).” It is not completely clear whether the text in *PG 1710* is claiming that Diocletian appointed Maximianus Herculios as co-emperor in AM 5777 (the year given to the entry), or in his fourth year (which would be AM 5780). The entry labelled AM 5777 in *PG 1710* seems to capture a range of years (something like AM 5777–5780) and so does not force the reader to assent to exactly which year saw the ascension of Maximianus. Thus, though the “correct” historical answer to when Maximianus was appointed co-emperor is AM 5777 instead of AM 5780, and though this does make *PG 1710* the more “accurate” version compared to all the others, this is not the point.[41]

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41   As C. Mango points out in footnote 2 for AM 5780 (MS 6) other sources convey Diocletian appointed Maximianus as *Caesar* in July 285 (= AM 5777) and as *Augustus* (i.e., co-culer) in April 286 (= AM 5778). The critical edition, in following the formatting of the majority tradition (as in *Wake Greek 5*), is historically inaccurate. There are many interpretative decisions to be made here. The sentence's concluding dative temporal clause—indicating that this was either Diocletian or Maximianus' fourth year—conflicts with the date at the entry's heading. Which date is the *Chronographia* claiming for this event? There are many more possibilities. The implications of any decision a scholar might make must be seriously considered for they lead us to form judgments about the degree of "historical

When the text continues past the point depicted in the image above, the reader is told that after the two emperors Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius had begun their joint rule (either during or after the fourth year of Diocletian's reign), they razed "to the ground Hobousiris and Koptos, cities of Thebes in Egypt." The emphasis here in *PG 1710* is on uninterrupted narrative, communicating that the reader is to associate the beginning of Diocletian's reign with his co-reign with Maximianus, and then with an attack on two Egyptian cities. The visual structure of *PG 1710* strings events together with the phrase "Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει (In this year)." It might be more accurate to say that in *PG 1710* this phrase serves not as a division, but a transition: not a full stop, but a comma in the chronology of the empire. The simple conclusion is that *PG 1710*'s version of the *Chronographia* is not concerned with exact dates as much as with relative order: a this-after-that chronology. It is, in other words, a historical narrative.

As a result of this difference the text in *PG 1710* has long been dismissed as a "paraphrase."[42] This is an inaccurate characterization of the evidence. The text in *PG 1710* is missing very little of the actual content of the *Chronographia*, it is a coherent and authentic presentation of the text. Furthermore, the point of our present comparison is to explain how the manuscript *PG 1710* requires the text be read, rather than to find the most "accurate" original version. The reader of *PG 1710* would not know the exact year in which she or he is meant to situate the second historical event of Diocletian's reign, which begins in the image depicted above.

The reader would, however, be very clear that they were reading an account of the reign of Diocletian, emphasized by the marginal notation in the image above. And as Juan Signes Codoñer recently pointed out, the scribe of *PG 1710* provided a form of organization that is absent in all other versions. In *PG 1710* majuscule headings appear in the top margins of the manuscript to mark the beginning of the reign of each emperor.[43] Many of these were partially or completely cropped at a later date but most are still quite strikingly obvious. At the end of Diocletian's reign, for instance, we find the next emperor—Constantine I—introduced as the next section of the narrative (f. 8r) as shown in figure 1.4.

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accuracy" of the text, the extent of good historical knowledge on the part of the authors, and then of historical knowledge available during the period in general.

42   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xcv, referring to de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2:364–65: "In *Regius* [*Parisinus graecus*] *1710* we have more an excerpted edition than a direct copy of the chronicle" (*Wir haben im Regius 1710 viel mehr eine excerpirende Bearbeitung, als eine direkte Abschrift der Chronik*).

43   Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," 170–71.
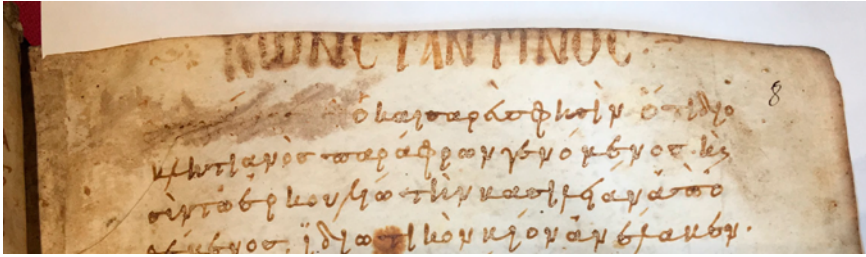
FIGURE 1.6 Paris, BnF Grec 1710, f. 8r top margin: ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟC (Constantine)
PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE BY THE AUTHOR

These large capitalis headers show unequivocally that the reigns of the emperors are the organizing blocks of *PG 1710*. Within each emperor's reign, the manuscript does occasionally use *annus mundi* dates to begin entries: in the reign of Diocletian there are two *annus mundi* dates noted, AM 5777 and AM 5788. But these do not impel a reader to calculate and write down for themselves all the intervening "missing" *annus mundi* dates. Instead, these infrequent reminders of the year of the world seem to provide the reader with subsections within the more significant divisions of the reigns of the emperors. The manuscript *PG 1710* made imperial reigns its sections or chapters, and within each imperial reign, irregular universal *annus mundi* dates seem to have created subsections to the "chapters" of each emperor's reign. Beyond that division, the *Chronographia* in *PG 1710* was organized into individual entries with a this-after-that notation—"Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει (In this year)"—rather than a notation of every passing year. In chapters 5, 6, and 7, I will show how these structural divisions create narratological clues which invite readers to interpret the meaning of emperors' reigns.

5   The Imperial Time of the *Chronographia*

One of the effects of the source-critical approach has been to prioritize debates over the dating accuracy of the *Chronicle* of Theophanes: scholars have been highly focused upon determining the AM year under which a hypothetical original text placed events and the accuracy of that date. To take the example of the entries I have just presented, the source-critical approach sees the primary conflict between these multiple manuscript versions to be an explicit conflict in dates: the content under AM 5780 in *Wake Greek 5* appears under AM 5777 in *PG 1710*. Which is original and which is correct? In this chapter I have outlined an alternative way of reading the manuscripts which opens up

an entirely different set of questions. Instead of seeing different versions as disagreeing over a historical date, I have argued that each manuscript's unique layout instead reveals a conceptual difference: a relative difference in priorities within the construction of a historical past time, each of which invites a slightly different approach to reading the content of the *Chronographia*.

Reading manuscripts' different layouts in this way opens up new interpretative possibilities. The chronicler Theophanes wrote in his *Preface* that he "set down accurately … their deeds, together with their dates" so that "in this manner the readers may be able to *know* in which year of what emperor what event took place."[44] K. de Boor's edition and C. Mango and R. Scott's translation necessitate that we understand this programmatic statement to mean that the reader should be "able to know in which year …" in the sense of looking up the dates of events. But the reader of *PG 1710* was in most cases not able to *know* in this way. As shown in table 1.5, there are only four entries between AM 5777 and AM 5788, and these entries did not begin with either an AM date or the year of an emperor but were only marked with "In this year." Such a chronology is in fact relative (this after that) rather than absolute (in a specific year). On the other hand, while the reader of *Wake Greek 5* could be "able to know in which year" in a literal sense, this was an active rather than a passive knowledge. As I observed in section 4.1, a careful reader of *Wake Greek 5* would need to use their memory to attach each number in a given series of the abbreviated dating rubrics to the relevant ruler. In the context of *Wake Greek 5* we would interpret Theophanes' statement in the Preface in a very specific way: medieval readers of the *Chronographia* knew the years of events in an active sense, by continually employing their own memory.

Furthermore, despite meaningful differences between the two early Greek recensions, the principle of imperial time (as opposed to universal time) characterizes *both* of these recensions of the *Chronographia*. The contrast between these early chronological forms and our modern edition is quite visible in a side-by-side comparison of the different dating *schemata* of the complete reign of Diocletian in these three different versions of the text. As table 1.3 shows, the *annus mundi* (Year-of-the-World) is an important part of the organizing scheme in the manuscript recensions, but the *dominant* organizing principle is the emperor's reign.[45]

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44   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 2.

45   There are only two distinctions of substance between *PG 1710* and *Wake Greek 5*: the text for K. de Boor's AM 5780 is in a different place in each manuscript, and *PG 1710* has a one-sentence addition just before its entry for AM 5788.

TABLE 1.3 Comparison of PG 1710, Wake Greek 5 and De Boor dating systems

PG 1710 Date	PG 1710 Content	Wake Greek 5 Date	Wake Greek 5 Content	De Boor Date	De Boor Content
5777	**prose as de Boor 5780**	5777	*[no prose, date only]*	**5777**	[Full Date Table only]
		Diocletian 2	*[no prose, date only]*	5778	[Abbreviated Table only]
		Diocletian 3	*[no prose, date only]*	5779	[Abbrev. Table only]
		Diocletian 4	prose as de Boor 5780	5780	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
		Diocletian 5	*[no prose, date only]*	5781	[Abbrev. Table only]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5782	Diocletian 6	prose as de Boor 5782	5782	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
		Diocletian 7	*[no prose, date only]*	5783	[Abbrev. Table only]
		Diocletian 8	*[no prose, date only]*	5784	[Abbrev. Table only]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5785	Diocletian 9	prose as de Boor 5785	5785	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5786	Diocletian 10	prose as de Boor 5786	5786	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5787 (+one sentence addition)	Diocletian 11	prose as de Boor 5787	5787	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
5788	prose as de Boor 5788	5788	*[no prose, date only]*	**5788**	[Full Date Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5789	Diocletian 13	*[no prose, date only]*	5789	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
		Diocletian 14		5790	[Abbrev. Table only]
		Diocletian 15		5791	[Abbrev. Table only]
		Diocletian 16	*[no prose, date only]*	5792	[Abbrev. Table only]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5793	Diocletian 17	prose as de Boor 5793	5793	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5794	Diocletian 18	prose as de Boor 5794	5794	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5795	Diocletian 19	prose as de Boor 5795	5795	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]
"In this year …"	prose as de Boor 5796	Diocletian 20	prose as de Boor 5796	5796	[Abbrev. Table + prose content]

The medieval manuscripts agree that the reigns of emperors are at the heart of chronology. As noted above (section 4.2) in the manuscript *PG 1710* the chronography was divided by majuscule headings for each new imperial reign. Under those primary divisions, the content is otherwise an undated succession of entries following each other by narrative order rather than by date ("In this year"). The exception to this is the sporadic use of the *annus mundi* years which served in practice as narrative breaks, such as 5777 and 5788 in Diocletian's reign (table 1.3, left column). In the manuscript *Wake Greek 5* (table 1.5, middle column), the two *annus mundi* dates are actually interruptions to a dating system that marches forward by counting each year of the reign of Diocletian. By contrast, in de Boor's edition (table 1.3, right column), though the editor indicated that in the manuscripts only 5777 and 5788 were annotated by a full dating rubric, nevertheless the *annus mundi* is *made* to be the entire organizing principle by adding that date into the far-left margin of every single entry, even though no medieval manuscript preserves such notation. As above (section 4.1), the critical translation of Mango and Scott (not in table 1.3) went even further in emphasizing these universal dates as the structure of the text by fully and completely distinguishing each date as an entry in its own right, even when there was no accompanying prose content. Each of these different systems generate different reading practices which are, in turn, entirely different ways of conceptualizing chronology.

One important benefit of this realization for Byzantine historiography is to clarify why the three surviving tenth-century chronicles which frame their text as continuations of the *Chronographia* project did not use an annalistic year-by-year format. The *Chronicle* of Symeon the Logothete (fl. 959–976), Genesios' *On the Reigns of Emperors* (written in ca. 915–930, and revised around 950), and the *Chronography of Theophanes Continuatus* (completed before 963) all divided their content by emperor, creating narrative images of their reigns. Rather than seeing this difference as a later rejection or a departure from an originally annalistic *Chronographia*, it can now be seen that this structural choice is in fact fully in line with the form in which these tenth-century historians would have read the *Chronographia*. In any case, it is clear that medieval readers read a *Chronographia* characterized by the regnal logic of the surviving manuscripts rather than by the annual logic of our modern editions.

The analysis and readings of this book will now follow the governing logic of the *Chronographia* in *PG 1710*, the logic of a continuous narrative in which the chronology is defined by the succeeding reigns of the Roman emperors. This approach builds directly upon the foregoing consideration of the surviving material evidence from the medieval period. Not only does the work establish the reigns of the Roman emperors as its individual structural units, but

the entire chronography is divided into two parts: one before the advent of the reigns of Roman emperors, and one after the advent of the reigns of Roman emperors. Or, to be more specific, the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes (covering AM 5434 to AM 6305) placed the origins of the present era in AM 5434 when the advent of the Roman *imperium* coincided with the "rule of a non-Jew over Judea." The structure and layout of the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes in particular defined the present era both temporally and conceptually as the fulfillment of the whole of the preceding past—described in the *Chronography* of George the Synkellos (covering AM 1 to AM 5434). The great fulfillment of that past was not only the Incarnation of the divine anointed Christ in AM 5500, but also the establishment of imperial Roman rule over Judea in AM 5434: Jewish rule over Judea was fulfilled in Roman rule over the world.

The remaining three chapters of Part 1 will lay out a methodology for us to interpret the implications of this structure for our pursuit of a historicized reading of the text. To accomplish this I establish, first (in chapter 2), how the *Chronographia*'s new chronography was given an authority over imperial history by the specific authorial persona of the *synkellos*, then (in chapter 3) how that persona connected with the interpretative agenda communicated to readers through the thesis of the First-Created Day, and lastly (in chapter 4) how these were brought to bear in the unique way the Preface of Theophanes implicated readers both intellectually and ethically in the very text of the *Chronographia*.

Author: The *Synkellos* and His Imperial Critique

George the Synkellos' epithet has become his eponym, and for our purposes this is something of a problem. Though Byzantinists are well aware that in fact Synkellos (or "Syncellus") is in no way George's name, the now-standard practice of referring to George in this manner has directly inhibited our ability to read and analyze the *Chronographia* in its ninth-century context. Discussing George the *synkellos* as "George Synkellos" makes it possible to craft arguments about his work and historical person without ever actually clarifying what his *office* entailed. This is particularly vexing because George the Synkellos has no reputation, no surviving personal history outside of his work. So far as we can tell ninth-century readers of the *Chronographia* would have relied on the epithet *synkellos* to give the *Chronographia* its authorial *auctoritas*. We, however, do not have a clear idea what this office entailed, or what associations it would have engendered in the minds of ninth-century Constantinopolitans, even though the office of *synkellos* must be the starting point for how to read the *Chronographia*'s authorial persona. Accordingly, rather than reconstructing a biography purporting independence from the *Chronographia* itself (which for the reason just stated is impossible), this chapter reconstructs what the authorial persona of a *synkellos* would have projected to its ninth-century readers and then concludes by proposing how that projection would influence readers' encounters of *synkelloi* in the *Chronographia*. In other words, instead of investigating what the empirical or historical author may have intended, I pursue the textual authorial persona as a means to lay the groundwork for the *intentio operis*: the way the text asked to be read.[1]

It is important to clarify that my focus on the author's persona over the author's empirical or actual history does not mean a lack of interest in the real consequences of the text.[2] What I mean is that the nature of the text only

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1   Umberto Eco, with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, and Christine Brooke-Rose, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini, Tanner Lectures in Human Values (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

2   A study of the late eighth-century history of the patriarch Nikephoros I adopts a similar approach to what I have just articulated: Dragoljub Marjanović, *Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century Byzantium: The Short History of Nikephoros of Constantinople*, CEMS 2 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018). A review of that work by W. Treadgold cautioned strongly against such a text-based method: "Postmodern scholars [such as Marjanović] dislike this [source-critical] approach because they are uninterested in historical events (if indeed they

allows us to wildly guess whether the hints about its author do actually apply to George to the degree that we can write a biography.[3] But what we *can* state with confidence is that the text was written in a way that *strongly encouraged* an attentive reader to think that its author had close ties to Syria-Palestine to the degree that he saw those Christians as a part of the Byzantine οἰκουμένη, to think that its author had held an office that put him in the upper echelon of imperial officials (at the same rank as generals, senators, and the patriarch himself), to think that its author wrote the text between 808–810 AD, and to think that he had rebelled against the emperor Nikephoros I from a trusted position within the emperor's own hierarchy. As we will see, all four of these components work together to frame an authorial persona with authoritative and justified criticisms of the *imperium*.

1 The Significance of George's Personal History for Reading the *Chronographia*

The *Chronographia* associates its author with Syria-Palestine, indicating the author spent time within that region either as a traveler, a resident, or a native-born person. In chapter 8, I will make something of the text's connections to Syria for its chronological thesis and for its potential audience. But in truth using the text's mentions of the Holy Land to try to construct a portrait of the author might, in hindsight, have amounted to a distraction. The field has been so focused on the authorial-biographical question that the brief personal asides in the *Chronographia* have garnered more scholarly attention than any other passages written by George. To give just a brief and selective summary: C. Mango argued that since a large amount of the material in the *Chronicle* consisted of detailed reports on ʿUmayyad and ʿAbbasid-held territories in Syria and Palestine, and since it seemed unbelievable for Theophanes as a lifelong residents of the environs of Constantinople to have such information, we could

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believe in historical reality at all) and care only about the later historians' 'construction of a narrative' by rewriting the sources (if indeed they believe in the existence of sources)." See: Warren T. Treadgold, "18.09.03, Marjanović, Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century Byzantium," *Medieval Review*, January 18, 2018, https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index .php/tmr/article/view/25450. Readers may decide whether my similar interest in the historical "construction of a narrative," and how that narrative was read, is a similarly reprehensible denial of "historical reality" and the very "existence of sources."

3 Note W. Adler and P. Tuffin's warning that not every passage mentioning Syria-Palestine was written by George the Synkellos himself. William Adler and Paul Tuffin, *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xxxn9.

posit an "eastern" dossier originating from George the Synkellos.[4] The question of this "Eastern Source" then became its own focus of energy and debate.[5] Meanwhile C. Mango's hypothesis of authorial agency was also taken up by a generation of critical scholarship—which in general confirmed his theory by locating the grammatical patterns of George the Synkellos even in late portions of the *Chronicle*—even while justified doubts were voiced.[6] Nevertheless, W. Treadgold recently made George the Synkellos' knowledge of the Holy Land as biographically concrete as possible arguing that if George was a frequent (πολλάκις) traveler between Jerusalem and the monastery of St. Chariton near Bethlehem, he was likely a monastic, an ecclesiastic, or even the *synkellos* to the patriarch of Jerusalem.[7] This wisp of evidence may or may not be connected to other fragmentary clues, such as the *Acta* of the second Council

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4   Cyril A. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?," *Zborknik Radova Vizantinoškog Instituta* 18 (1978): 9–18; G. L. Huxley, "On the Erudition of George the Synkellos," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* 81C (1981): 207–17. The most recent innovative contribution is: Andrzej Kompa, "In search of Syncellus' and Theophanes' own words: the authorship of the Chronographia revisited," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 73–92.

5   Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, ᴛᴛʜ 15 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993); Robert G. Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, ᴛᴛʜ 57 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011). A fine rebuttal can be found in: Maria Conterno, "Palestina, Siria, Costantinopoli: La 'Cronografia' di Teofane Confessore e la mezzaluna fertile della storiografia nei 'secoli bui' di Bisanzio" (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2011).

6   In particular this resulted in decades detailed textual critical work by Paul Speck, summarized in Paul Speck, *Kaiser Leon III., die Geschichtswerke des Nikephoros und des Theophanes und der Liber Pontificalis*, Poikila Byzantina 19 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2002), 19–25. For remaining doubts, see Alexander P. Kazhdan, in collaboration with Lee Francis Sherry and Christina Angelidi, "The Monastic World Chronicle: Theophanes the Confessor," in *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)*, Research Series 2 (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 1999), 216–18. Kazhdan provides a useful historiographical summary in note 35.

7   Warren T. Treadgold, "The Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19. (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 9–30; Warren T. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). St. Chariton was founded by the saint as "Souka," and was called the Old Lavra from the sixth century. See the map in Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, ᴅᴏs 32 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995), 52. McCormick has published Carolingian documents confirming that at the turn of the ninth century the *Lavra* of Chariton was overseen by the administration of the Patriarch of Jerusalem: Michael McCormick, *Charlemagne's Survey of the Holy Land: Wealth, Personnel, and Buildings of a Mediterranean Church between Antiquity and the Middle Ages: With a Critical Edition and Translation of the Original Text* ᴅᴏᴍʜ 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2011). One could even seek a parallel

of Nicaea in 787. Those *Acta* note that "George the most God-loving deacon and notary of the holy patriarchal residence" (Γεώργιος ὁ θεοφιλέστατος διάκονος καὶ νοτάριος τοῦ εὐαγ[οῦ]ς πατριαρχείου) read out a sermon promoting the use of icons in worship.[8] It has been speculated that perhaps this deacon George serving in patriarch Tarasios' entourage at the Council of Nicaea would later become *synkellos* and author of the *Chronographia*, or that perhaps the patriarch was honoring our George for travelling from Syria-Palestine by requesting he read out a sermon by bishop Antipater of Bostra in Syria.[9] On the other hand, it seems that it was actually the mid-ninth-century chronicler George Monachos who invented the idea that George the Synkellos attended the council of Nicaea for the Patriarch of Jerusalem.[10] In fact, we can never verify these tantalizing traces of clues. There will never be enough evidence to make more than a hypothesis, and certainly never enough to construct an actual biography from which to generate viable interpretations of the *Chronographia*. As

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in the life of Michael the Synkellos, *the Synkellos* to the patriarch of Jerusalem, who came to Constantinople in that capacity in 815—merely five years after George the Synkellos wrote his *Chronographia*—and in 843 was appointed *the Synkellos* of Patriarch Methodios I. Had George the Synkellos already followed that very path? See Mary Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, BBTT 1 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, Dept. of Greek & Latin, Queen's University of Belfast, 1991).

8   *Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea* (787). Ed. Erich Lamberz, *Concilium universale Nicaenum secundum: Concilii actiones IV–V*, ACO II.3.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 302.7–16.

9   See the comments in Alexander P. Kazhdan, "Some Observations," in *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 200–206. If George the Synkellos was present at the council as the *synkellos* of Jerusalem he should have been identified as such, especially since challenges to the council's ecumenicity claimed no one had attended the council who could formally represent the patriarch Elias of Jerusalem. A *synkellos* was an accepted representative *in abstentia*. If one had been there he would have been mentioned as such as in Stephanos Efthymiadis, ed. and trans., *The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon (BHG 1698)*, BBOM 4 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 83.

10   Karl de Boor and Peter Wirth, eds., *Georgii Monachi Chronicon*, BSGRT (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1978), 769.16. The comment comes in George Monachos' discussion of the council's ecumenicity, providing the missing representative Elias of Jerusalem *should* have had by inventing George, monk and priest. Later writers equated this "George the monk" with George the Synkellos. Granted, though fabricated these attributions indicate that George the Synkellos *was* associated with Jerusalem even decades after his death, and in the 870s Anastasius Bibliothecarius also assumed George the Synkellos was at the 787 council, drawing his conclusion from George's association with patriarch Tarasios. See Anastasius' letter to John the Deacon, "Epistle 7," Ernst Perels and Gerhard Laehr, ed. "Anastasii Bibliothecarii Epistolae Sive Praefationes," in *Epistolae Karolini aevi V*, ed Societas aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi, MGH Epp 7 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), 420.5–11.

the editors of the *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* (*PmbZ*) point out, there is great risk in piecing together evidence in this way.[11]

Individual readers may have identified George as an immigrant from Syria, but how many readers would use the idea that the author was a monastic from Syria to inform their readings?[12] Instead of trying to interpret the *Chronographia* on the basis of a speculative biography, I would simply point out that the *Chronographia* links its authorial voice with Syria-Palestine. That is significant in itself. Three references in the *Chronographia* indicate the sort of local knowledge one could gain either from travel, or from talking to a traveller: that manna brought from Parthia was not necessarily eaten in Jerusalem; and, how harvest rhythms connected with liturgical practices in Jericho.[13] Two

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11   Georgios no. 2191 in Ralph-Johannes Lilie and Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002). Hereafter, referred to as *PmbZ*.

12   I would wager there *would* be a few, but they would have to have been unusually attentive. For instance, one of the passages in question notes the specific monasteries affected and continues the marked preference for the *lavra* (a collection of hermits) of St Chariton over St Sabas, consistent with the statements mentioned above. Frequent travel between Jerusalem and St Chariton near Bethlehem may well have associated the author with monastic or ecclesiastical duties for Jerusalem in the mind of the text's audience. Given recently-published confirmation that in ca. 800 the *Lavra* of Chariton was overseen by the administration of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, it is tempting to postulate that a historical George was *synkellos* of Jerusalem before he held the position in Constantinople. AT 152–3 / M 122. Under AM 6301 (AD 808/9) the *Chronicle* records strife in Syria during the 'Abbasid caliphate's succession crisis after the death of Harun al-Rashid. "The inhabitants of Syria, Egypt, and Libya were divided into different principalities and destroyed the common weal as well as one another … For this reason also the churches in the holy city of Christ our God were made desolate, as well as the monasteries of the two great *lavras*, namely that of Sts Chariton and Kyriakos and that of St Sabas and the other *koinobia*, namely those of St Euthymios and St Theodosios. The slaughter resulting from this anarchy, directed at each other and against us, lasted five years." οἱ κατὰ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ Αἴγυπτον καὶ Λιβύην εἰς διαφόρους κατατμηθέντες ἀρχὰς τά τε δημόσια πράγματα καὶ ἀλλήλους κατέστρεψαν, σφαγαῖς καὶ ἁρπαγαῖς καὶ παντοίαις ἀτοπίαις πρός τε ἑαυτοὺς καὶ τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτοὺς Χριστιανοὺς συγκεχυμένοι. ἔνθεν δὴ καὶ αἱ κατὰ τὴν ἁγίαν Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν πόλιν ἐκκλησίαι ἠρήμωνται, τά τε μοναστήρια τῶν δύο μεγάλων λαυρῶν, τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Χαρίτωνος καὶ Κυριακοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Σάβα, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ κοινόβια τῶν ἁγίων Εὐθυμίου καὶ Θεοδοσίου· ἐπεκράτησε δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀναρχίας ἡ κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἡμῶν μιαιφονία ἔτη ε'. MS 665 / dB 484 (AM 6301).

13   "When manna was brought back from Parthia, I myself saw it and partook of it." τοῦτο μὲν οὖν τὸ μάννα κομισθὲν ἐκ τῆς Παρθικῆς εἶδον ἐγὼ καὶ μετέσχον αὐτοῦ. AT 188 / M 150.17; "Joshua set another twelve stones in the Jordan, where the feet of the priests carrying the ark had stood, and they are there until this day." Ἔστησέ τε ἄλλους ιβ' λίθους Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, οὗ ἔστησαν οἱ πόδες τῶν αἰρόντων τὴν κιβωτὸν ἱερέων, καὶ εἰσὶν ἐκεῖ ἕως σήμερον. AT 206 / M 167.18–19; and "even to this day one can see in Jericho at the vernal equinox

other comments seem to put the author's own feet squarely on the roads of the Holy Land, indicating travel from Sinai to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.[14] In chapter 8 I will connect these anecdotes to others and show how the text uses the first person plural to associate Constantinopolitan readers with the people of Syria-Palestine.[15] Given the apparently unknown personal history of the author, reconstructing his biography is a distraction from the evidence we *do* have of the *image* of authorship, of *auctoritas*, that the *Chronographia* presented to its readers.[16] Turning to that image makes George's office of *synkellos* suddenly far more significant for interpretative readings than a speculative biography. Thus, from this point forward this chapter focuses on the fact that the office of *synkellos* is the primary characteristic of the author's *dramatis persona*.

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new grain being harvested early in the warmer locations. From this grain, the most holy church in Jerusalem customarily offers the bloodless offering [the Eucharist] during the anniversary of the life-bringing Resurrection of Christ our God." ὅπερ μέχρι νῦν ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ἐν Ἱεριχὼ κατὰ τὴν ἐαρινὴν ἰσημερίαν γενόμενον θερισμὸν σίτου νέου κατὰ τοὺς θερμοτέρους τόπους συμφθάζοντα. ἐξ οὗ καὶ ἡ κατὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα ἁγιωτάτη ἐκκλησία συνήθως προφέρει τὴν ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ζωηφόρου ἀναστάσεως Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. ΑΤ 207 / Μ 168.13–16.

14   "Moses recalled what happened on their journey [to the promised land] … but although the whole trip from Kades Barne up to the valley of Zareth is not even five days, as we know from our own experience, it took them thirty-eight years to accomplish the journey, since God was making them roam hither and thither." τά τε τῆς ὁδοιπορίας τῶν τε κατ᾽ αὐτὴν παραβάσεων καὶ τὴν πατρῴαν αὐτῶν ἀπείθειαν … καίτοι τῆς ὅλης ὁδοῦ ἀπὸ Κάδης Βαρνὴ ἕως φάραγγος Ζαρὲθ μὴ οὔσης ε᾽ ἡμερῶν, ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐπειράθημεν, ἥτις αὐτοῖς καταρεμβευομένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν λ᾽ καὶ η᾽ χρόνοις διήνυσται. ΑΤ 204 / Μ 165. The second passage in question not only purports an eye-witness' attestation of a local historical site but provides the context for this knowledge from personal experience: "Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin, and she was buried between Bethlehem and Jerusalem in the hippodrome. This was the 21st year of Levi, ΑΜ 3575. In my journeys to Bethlehem and what is known as the Old Lavra of blessed Chariton, I personally have passed by there frequently and seen her coffin lying on the ground." Ῥαχὴλ ἐν τῷ τίκτειν τὸν Βενιαμὶν ἐτελεύτησε, καὶ ἐτάφη μεταξὺ Βηθλεὲμ καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ εἰς τὸν ἱππόδρομον. ἦν δὲ τοῦ Λευὶ ἔτος κα᾽, τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἦν ἔτος ͵γφοε᾽. ταύτης ἐγὼ τὴν λάρνακα τῆς γῆς ὑπερκειμένην πολλάκις ἐκεῖσε παροδεύων ἐπὶ Βηθλεὲμ καὶ τὴν παλαιὰν λεγομένην λαύραν τοῦ ὁσίου Χαρίτωνος ἑώρακα. ΑΤ 152–53 / Μ 122.

15   The collective pronoun associates author and audience with the suffering monks resident in the Holy Land. See ΑΤ 204 / Μ 165.

16   A self-referential statement that has received much less attention than the others notes the author borrowed a manuscript from the library of Caesarea in Cappadocia. ΑΤ 295 / Μ 240.

2   What Was a *synkellos* in ca. 800?

The *Chronographia* used George's epithet *synkellos* to establish *auctoritas* for an author who otherwise had no reputation.[17] George is defined by his office, but at present we understand as little about what a *synkellos* is as we know about George. Unlike the plunges into a speculative biography that scholars have already attempted, we *can* say something new about the *synkellos* with a return to the contemporary sources. In what follows I reconstruct, as far as possible, what can be taken as common knowledge in ninth-century Constantinople about the office of *synkellos*.

I begin with the point that in the absence of knowing anything remarkable about the historic George, the reader is invited to make assumptions based on the author's office. The *Chronographia* itself emphasizes George's identity as "*synkellos* of the Patriarch Tarasios" by making every prefatory comment to every manuscript copy of the *Chronographia* contain a version of this identification:

> The most blessed father-abbot George, being also the *synkellos* of Tarasios, the most-holy patriarch of Constantinople.[18]
>
> or
>
> A selection of chronography arranged by the monk George, being the *synkellos* of Tarasios the patriarch of Constantinople.[19]
>
> or
>
> A *Syntaxis* or *Chronography* of George the most revered monk who was also the *synkellos* of Tarasios the most-holy archbishop of Constantinople.[20]

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17   A parallel example within the tradition of Byzantine Greek chronicling is the sixth-century work of John Malalas. With no other known works by John Malalas, his eponym (meaning *rhetor*) conveyed a significant part of why he should be listened to: he was a highly-trained, learned bureaucrat.

18   Ὁ μὲν μακαριώτατος ἀββᾶς Γεώργιος, ὁ καὶ σύγκελλος γεγονὼς Ταρασίου, τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.MS 1 / dB 3.8–9, from Theophanes' preface. The statement that George was ἀββᾶς does not mean he was an abbot (*hegoumenos*).

19   Ἐκλογὴ χρονογραφίας συνταγεῖσα ὑπὸ Γεωργίου μονάχου συγκέλλου γεγονότος Ταρασίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.AT 1 / M 1.1–6, from the preface to *Chronographia1* in BnF, *Grec 1764* (s. xi) and BnF, *Grec 1711* (s. xi).

20   Γεωργίου τοῦ εὐλαβέστατου μονάχου καὶ συγκέλλου γεγονότος Ταρασίου τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου ἀρχιεπισκόπου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως σύνταξις ἤτοι χρονογραφία. AT 431 / M 360.1–4, from the preface to *Chronographia2* in Christ Church College, *Wake Greek 5* (s. ix), BAV, *Vat. gr.* 155 (s. ix), BnF, *Cois.* 133 (s. xii), BAV, *Vat. gr.* 154 (s. xii).

Three things here are certain. George was a monastic. Second, George held the office of *synkellos* under Tarasios. Third, George wrote the *Chronographia*.

At present, the office of *synkellos* is defined as an ecclesiastical office held by a monastic who provided the patriarchal bishop with some sort of assistance or advice.[21] This definition does not help in relating the role George the Synkellos played in his office to a reading of the work. Thus, it is not a surprise that in their readings of his text scholars have given little time to considering the significance of George the Synkellos as a high-ranking Constantinopolitan official.[22] Fortunately for our purposes, the standard definition does not accurately capture what our sources indicate about the office of *synkellos* of Constantinople in the ninth century.

Scholars take George's full title *"synkellos* of Tarasios" to mean his was an ecclesiastical office *under* the authority of the patriarch. This interpretation is historically inaccurate, and I believe it has implicitly pushed readings of the entire *Chronographia* as an ecclesiastical history rather than a chronicle concerned with the nature of imperial power as such.[23] As we shall see, the ninth-century *synkellos* of Constantinople was a very high-ranking *imperial* official embedded as a sort of diplomat for the emperor within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Unpacking the nuances of this office will lay the foundation for my argument that the *Chronographia* presented itself as an authority on imperial history in general, and on the ethics of imperial power and policy in particular.

The office of *synkellos* derives from the monastic context, its place within the patriarchal administration the result of being gradually co-opted by a number of emperors over the course of Late Antiquity. This is an important point: the formation of the office does not seem to have been the result of administrative activities by patriarchs but by emperors. Our clearest understanding of the office of *synkellos* as an institution comes from the eleventh century.[24]

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21   Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), xliii; Adler and Tuffin (*Chronography of George Synkellos*, xxix–xxx) do not offer any discussion.

22   For instance, Kazhdan, "Monastic World Chronicle."

23   Marjanović, *Creating Memories in Late 8th-Century Byzantium*.

24   Aristeides Papadakis, ODB s.v. "George Synkellos." For further bibliography see: Jean Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, AOC 11 (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1970), 17–19 in which the *synkellos* features as an ecclesiastical office corrupted (especially in the eleventh century) by imperial intervention; Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXᵉ et Xᵉ siècles: Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire*, Le monde byzantin (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1972), 308 with nn14–16; Venance Grumel, "Titulature de Métropolites Byzantins. I. Les métropolites syncelles," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 3, no. 1 (1945): 92–114, especially 92–97; Ihor Ševčenko, "An Early Tenth-Century Inscription

The increase in understanding is due to the spread of the office and dilution of its power: by the eleventh century, the office of *synkellos* was no longer exclusively used by patriarchs but was fully adopted into the administration of every metropolitan-level bishop.[25] The eleventh-century characteristics of the office are completely different from what we can uncover about the office in the early ninth century. The period in which the office of *synkellos* to the patriarch of Constantinople had the greatest power—the period in which George was *synkellos*—is also necessarily the period that produced the least documentary evidence. In the ninth century there was still a limit (established in the seventh century) of at most two *synkelloi* for the patriarch.[26] These *synkelloi* could then work as antagonists to the interests of patriarchs *to whom* they were appointed.

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         from Galakrenai with Echoes from Nonnos and the Palatine Anthology," *Dumbarton Oaks
         Papers* 41 (1987): 463–64; and, Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xlivn7.

25   Oikonomides situates this change to the reign of John Tzimiskes, specifically the 970s.
         See Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 308n116. The majority of the evidence does not
         come from texts but from inscriptions on lead seals, usually impressed with a monogram-
         matic invocation on one side, and the name, title and office of the sender on the other.
         Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, "Sigillography," in *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era
         (ca 680–850): The Sources*, BBOM 7 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 129–40. Over 80,000 such
         official seals survive, and the majority of these are from the seventh to tenth centuries.
         These seals give us our clearest window into the public and private administrative life of
         the middle Byzantine period since each would have accompanied a written communica-
         tion of some kind. Seals, usually 25 mm in diameter, were struck on both sides as coins
         with a "seal-clamp" (βουλλωτήριον) that was updated each time the owner was appointed
         to a new office or with a new dignity. The administrative activities of the metropolitan
         synkelloi of this period seem to be due mostly to their roles as *hegoumenoi* (abbots) over-
         seeing important and powerful monastic communities within their bishop's diocese.
         In other words, by the eleventh century the office of *synkellos* had actually become an
         honorific ecclesiastical dignity given to an individual whose primary function was ful-
         filled in an office other than that of *synkellos*. The few seals of the monk and *synkellos*
         Niketas (*PmbZ* no. 5515 and no. 5516) from the turn of the tenth century echo George the
         Synkellos' position with the inscription: Νικήτᾳ μοναχῷ καὶ συ⟨γ⟩κέλλῳ. Vitalien Laurent,
         Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin, vol. 5.1, *L'église de Constantinople: le hiérarchie*
         (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1963), nos. 224–225. In
         his catalogue of Byzantine seals, V. Laurent organized the *synkelloi* among ecclesiastical
         specimens, and within that sphere as a dignity rather than an office: *Synkelloi* at Laurent,
         Corpus des sceaux, vol. 5.1, nos. 217–239 under "Dignities," pp. 117–167, rather than under
         "Offices," pp. 43–115. In general, an "office" had actual power—such as the *oikonomos* of
         the patriarch who oversaw the great properties and estates which made the see not only
         financially independent but wealthy—whereas a "dignity" was a position of honor that
         primarily denoted influence.

26   In his edict of April 24, 619 on the administrative structure of the church of Hagia Sophia,
         Heraclius limited the total number of *synkelloi* to two in capping the number of clergy in
         the cathedral at 165. Franz Dölger and Andreas E. Müller, eds., *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden
         des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, vol. 1.1, *Regesten von (565–867)*, 2nd ed., Corpus der

An early example reveals the potential emperors came to see in the office. In the seventh-century *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschos, there is a first-person account narrated by Theodore bishop of Dara about a time when he was serving as *synkellos* to the patriarch of Alexandria. Theodore had a dream in which he was approached by a man demanding an introduction to patriarch Eulogios of Alexandria (r. 581–608). As *synkellos*, Theodore in turn demanded the figure's identity. The figure turned out to be Leo, Pope of Rome. But even in the dream the Pope met the bishop of Alexandria *only* after Theodore the *synkellos* permitted his entrance into the bishop's room.[27] The plausibility of this vision depends upon the assumption that the *synkellos* completely controlled access to the patriarch.

Could a *synkellos* opposed to his patriarch really utilize this power to prevent a patriarch's allies from having access to him? We see such potential exploited as early as the reign of Justinian I. In the middle of the sixth century, Justinian I appointed two *synkelloi* to the patriarch of Jerusalem at his own discretion.[28] In this instance we find that these *synkelloi* controlled access

griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, Reihe A, Regesten Abt. 1. (München: C. H. Beck, 2009), (1924 numbering, no. 175). According to the *Chronicle* of Theophanes under AM 6113, the context for this reform was financial necessity: Heraclius, short on money and about to go on expedition against Persia, "took on loan the monies of religious establishments and he also took the candelabra and other vessels of the holy ministry from the Great Church, which he minted into a great quantity of gold and silver coin." MS 435 / dB 303. In the anecdotes from earlier centuries the *synkelloi* never explicitly overlap, though presumably when John the Cappadocian (s. vi) served as emissary to Persia in his capacity as *synkellos*, a second remained in the capital. Maintaining two *synkellois* does seem to have become standard practice until the tenth century. See: Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 303. Fluctuations between having one or two *synkelloi* at a time also seems to reflect the need to exert imperial power more or less forcefully.

27 Moschos relays the subsequent exchange in Theodore's own voice as follows: "I asked him, 'Who are you, my lord? How do you wish to be announced?' He replied, 'I am Leo, Pope of Rome.' So I went in and announced, 'The most holy and blessed Leo, Primate of the Church of the Romans, wishes to pay you his respects.' As soon as Pope Eulogios heard, he got up and came running to meet him. They embraced each other, offered a prayer, and sat down." Καὶ λέγω αὐτῷ· Τίς εἶ, δέσποτα; Πῶς κελεύεις ἵνα μηνύσω; Αὐτὸς ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει μοι· Ἐγώ εἰμι Λέων ὁ πάπας Ῥώμης. Εἰσελθὼν οὖν ἐγὼ ἐμήνυσα, λέγων· Ὁ ἁγιώτατος καὶ μακαριώτατος πάπας Λέων Ἐκκλησίας Ῥωμαίων πρόεδρος προσκυνῆσαι ὑμᾶς θέλει. Ὡς οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ πάπας Εὐλόγιος, δρομαίως ἀναστὰς ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ· καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι ἀλλήλους καὶ εὐχὴν ποιήσαντες ἐκαθέσθησαν. Pope Leo goes on to commend Eulogios of Alexandria for his defense of Leo's doctrinal statements. John Moschos, *Pratum Spirituale* 148 in *PG* 87/3, 3012.35–42; trans. John Wortley, *The Spiritual Meadow: John Moschus* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 2008), 121–22.

28 The context of the *Vita* of Sabas indicates that it was the patriarch of Constantinople who either made the appointment or pushed it through official channels: καὶ οὕτως πληροφορηθέντες ὑπέστρεψαν μὲν εἰς τὴν Νέαν λαύραν, ἔμειναν δὲ ἐνέχοντες πικρῶς τοῖς τῆς Μεγίστης

to the patriarch to such a degree that they barred individuals from an audience. One source describes an occasion when the *synkelloi* drove off monks with "blows and insults." Through such bully tactics these *synkelloi* pushed through the appointment of an ally in their own party (one Gregory whom Cyril of Skythopolis calls "the cruel wolf") to be *hegoumenos* (abbot) of a powerful monastery, the Great Lavra. Gregory began his tenure accompanied by an armed guard to ensure compliance.[29] We can conclude that the imperial appointment of *synkelloi* meant they could play a key role in politics through the exertion of brute force to control physical access to the patriarch.

The office of patriarch was, like the patriarchal *synkellos*, an imperial appointment. But unlike the patriarch, who subsequently headed his own administration, the *synkellos* would never oversee anyone else and so remained entirely within the imperial hierarchy. When we take this into account, we can clarify why there is a pattern over the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries of a *synkellos* becoming patriarch. This pattern is not a by-product of the individual's importance within the patriarchate but of their importance *to the emperor*. Why would emperors appoint patriarchs whose loyalties were entirely invested in an alternative administrative structure? Instead, the emperors' trust of *synkelloi* to be good partners makes much more sense as resulting from the trust built up through the *synkelloi*'s long proximity to the inner workings of the palace.

The idea of a "department of religion" is anachronistic but helps to clarify that, like the military, the church had a certain intrinsic power which derived

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λαύρας πατράσιν. τότε ὁ Ἀσκιδᾶς ἀνελθόντα ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει τὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον Πέτρον ἠνάγκασεν συγκέλλους ἔχειν Πέτρον τε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρέα καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν Στρογγύλον, Ἰωάννην δὲ τὸν εὐνοῦχον τῆς μονῆς Μαρτυρίου κρατοῦντα ἡγούμενον τῆς νέας ἐκκλησίας πεποίη-κεν. Kyrillos of Skythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 86. Ed. Eduard Schwartz, "Leben des Sabas," in *Kyrillos von Skythopolis*, TUGAL 4.2 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1939), 193.15–18, 123–24. The available English translation renders *synkelloi* as "chancellors" in R. M. Price, with John Binns, trans. *Cyril of Scythopolis, Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, Cistercian Studies Series 114 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 202.

29   For the narrative see the analysis of Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism*, 332–40. At Gelasios' death upon his return from Constantinople, the "fathers of the Great Lavra assembled together at the holy city to ask the patriarch for a *hegoumenos*. But, when they had been announced, the were chased out from the church, with blows and insults, under the order of the *synkelloi*, and, after they had suffered after all the persecutions, they returned without result to the *lavra*." καὶ τοῦτο ἐγνωκότες οἱ τῆς Μεγίστης λαύρας πατέ-ρες ἀνῆλθον ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ πόλει αἰτῆσαι ἡγούμενον καὶ μηνύσαντες τῷ πατριάρχῃ τοῦ ἐπισκοπείου μεθ᾽ ὕβρεων καὶ ὠθισμῶν ἐξεβλήθησαν κατ᾽ ἐπιτροπὴν τῶν συγκέλλων καὶ πολ-λῶν θλίψεων αὐτοῖς ἐντεῦθεν ἐπιγενομένων ἄπρακτοι εἰς τὴν λαύραν ὑπέστρεψαν. Kyrillos of Skythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 87, 125. Ed. Schwartz, "Leben," 195.7–11, 125. The available English translation renders *synkelloi* as "chancellors" in Price, *Lives of the Monks*, 204.

from specific jurisdictions. The patriarch was both the independent head of the church and one of the "Council of Ministers," an advisor to the emperor on religious affairs as well as on general policy matters.[30] These would include certain legal matters, righteous moral authority, and supervision of holy things—from the Eucharist itself to pious donations of land and resources. This power enabled the church to act, at least at times, in explicit opposition to imperial policy. If *synkelloi* could control a disobedient patriarch—a much-easier prospect than trying to actually depose one—this would have made them highly valuable to the emperor.[31] If the patriarch headed the empire's department of religion, the *synkellos* seems to have functioned as the head of religious oversight, the emperor's insurance that the department of religion behaved. It would seem the emperors of this period used the office of *synkellos* as a way of reclaiming some of that power and limiting opposition.

At the turn of the ninth century the *synkellos* of Constantinople directly oversaw neither property, records, money, nor troops. At the same time, it is clear that the position entailed great importance and influence both within the empire and outside of it. An example from the reign of Herakleios can help to demonstrate the influence of the *synkellos* in domestic affairs. The conciliar *Acta* of the Lateran council in 649 record an in-session reading of the controversial Statement of Faith (*Ekthesis*) of 638.[32] This document was written by the

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30 Paul J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1958), 71, citing J. B. Bury, *The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire: Creighton Memorial Lecture Delivered at University College, London 12 November 1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 32.

31 We can also point to empress Theodora's appointment of *synkelloi* in the context of a mid-ninth-century cleansing of the patriarchate to make way for a shift in imperial policy. See *Vita s. Michaelis Synkelli* 9.25, 27 in Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkelli*, 102.14–18, 104.21–31. Interestingly, this appointment is the only historical instance in which we can be sure of the identity of both new *synkelloi*. In addition to the just-mentioned Michael an anonymous *Vita* of three saints—David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos—states that at the elevation of Methodios to the patriarchal throne one of these three, Symeon, was also appointed a *synkellos*. Translated by Douglas Domingo-Forasté, "Life of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saint's Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, BSLT 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 225, with n409.

32 A note on this source: Heraclius' edict did not meet with acceptance: in our source, the Latin *Acta* of the Lateran council of 649, the text and the history of its generation were being read out for condemnation. The *Ekthesis* sought to propose a theological compromise acceptable both to those who proposed that Christ had one nature (Miaphysites) and those who insisted he had two (Duophysites and Chalcedonians). This controversy was of such significance that it had rent communities across the empire; the urgent proposal of unity in the *Ekthesis* was an attempt at compromise, a confession that Christ had

patriarch Sergios and issued by the emperor Herakleios, but the preface of the *Ekthesis* provides a context for its creation that indicates one Stephen—who fulfilled the offices of both *synkellos* and *chartophylax*[33]—might also need to be considered an author of the document. Stephen brought patriarch Sergios a message from emperor Herakleios. The message commanded the patriarch to write a tract promoting the monoenergist position.[34] According to Sergios, the order was first put forward (προτείνω) by the *synkellos* and composed (συντί-θημι) by the emperor himself. Once finished, it was then Stephen the *synkellos* who read out the completed edict in the Council of Constantinople held in 638.[35] The *synkellos* of Constantinople here played the roles of liaison, messenger, and negotiator between the cathedral and the palace complexes.

The *synkellos* would be similarly used in foreign affairs, as a diplomat and ambassador between the Romans and other external powers. John Grammatikos, *synkellos* and eventual patriarch of Constantinople, provides us with an example from the ninth century itself.[36] As *synkellos*, John was trusted

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one energy, an idea known as Monoenergism. On the primacy of the Latin conciliar *Acta* for the *Ekthesis* see: Marek Jankowiak, "The Invention of Dyothelitism," *Studia Patristica* 63 (2013): 335–42.

33   It appears that one of Stephen's seals survives (Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, no. 83). The patriarchal *chartophylax* was in charge of the patriarchal archives and the copying and publication of patriarchal edicts. The best discussion of the *chartophylax* is Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, 19–28; 333–337; surviving mentions of the office are examined in: E. Beurlier, "Le chartophylax de la Grande Église de Constantinople," *Compte-rendu du troisième congrès scientifique international des catholiques tenu à Bruxelles du 3 au 8 septembre 1894*, vol. 5 (Brussels: Société belge de librairie, 1895), 252–66.

34   *Acts of the Lateran Synod (649)*, session 3. Ed. Rudolf Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense a. 649 celebratum*, ACO II.1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 164.27.

35   A similar anecdote can be found in the *Chronographia*'s account of the fifth century under the *Chronicle*'s entry for AM 5923 (AD 430/431). There we find that the patriarch Nestorios had "his own *synkellos*" read out a sermon that gave an exposition on particulars of the Faith. From this it seems the *synkellos* of the fifth century could be expected to be the "fall guy" for politically sensitive edicts, for Nestorius' statement of faith proposed ideas that would later be condemned as heretical.

36   Note that John Grammatikos also served as *hegoumenos* of the important imperial monastery of Sts. Sergios and Bacchos near the imperial palace Two of John Grammatikos' seals from this appointment survive. The specimen of poorer quality, held at Dumbarton Oaks (58.106.5744) was published by Vitalien Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 5.3, *L'église: Supplément* (Paris: Édition du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1972), no. 1917; the better specimen is in the Zacos collection in Basel, published by George Zacos and Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1.2, *Nos. 1096–2671A: Non-Imperial Seals, IVth–IXth Centuries* (Basel: s.n. distributed by J. J. Augustin, 1972), no. 2031. See the discussion by Nicolas Oikonomidès, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine*

enough to serve the interests of the emperor to be chosen as imperial ambassador to Baghdad. The tenth-century *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (discussed in more detail below) confirms this anecdote as an established role: when *synkelloi* represented patriarchal bishops as ambassadors, the *synkelloi* were accorded the same ceremonial honors due to the bishops themselves.[37] In other words, the emperor could send his *synkellos* with all of the authority as if he had sent the patriarch himself.[38] Imperial reliance on the *synkellos* of Constantinople seems to be a long-established practice which must have been, in practice, not only the result of personal trust, but also of the emperor's influence over the office. The *Chronographia* seems to have played an active role in creating this sense of a *cursus honorum* between the office of *synkellos* and the office of the patriarch. Previous sources attest that John of Cappadocia (not to be confused with the famous Justinianic administrator John the Cappadocian) reigned as patriarch (518–520) directly after his service as *synkellos*.[39] The *Chronographia* also asserted that John's immediate successor Epiphanios followed this same career path even though the earlier sources from which the

Lead Seals (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986), no. 47.

37   Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 3. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 163.10–13.

38   Three such examples are found in another chronicle, the seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale*. In 614 the *synkellos* Anastasios took part in diplomatic negotiations with the Khazar Chagan as one of three civic representatives. And, in 615 the text records that the three ambassadors sent from Herakleios to Chosroes at Chalcedon were Olympios the *Praetorian Prefect*, Leontios the City Prefect and Anastasius the "most God-loved presbyter and *synkellos* of Hagia Sophia." *Chronicon Paschale* 615. Ed. Ludwig August Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, 2 vols., CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1832), 706; 709.11; trans. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, TTH 7 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 159–60; 161. Finally, eight years later, the *synkellos* Theodore met the Chagan outside the city of Constantinople as one of six ambassadors on behalf of the absent emperor, Heraclius. *Chronicon Paschale* 626. Ed. Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, 721.9; trans. Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, 175.

39   This John the *synkellos* was appointed patriarch presumably in large part due to the trust earned by his successful mission to Persia in AD 517 (AM 6010): MS 248 / dB 164. Based on a surviving fragment we believe this information was drawn from Theodore Lector's no longer extant *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which noted that John the Cappadocian was sent on this mission by Emperor Anastasios (though without the mention of Persia). Theodore Lector, *Epitome* fr. 523M. Ed. Günther Christian Hansen, *Theodoros Anagnostes Kirchengeschichte*, GCS NF 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995), 151.19–20. See now the new edition and translation: Rafał Kosiński, et al., trans., *The Church Histories of Theodore Lector and John Diakrinomenos*, Studies in Classical Literature and Culture 11 (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021).

Chronographia likely drew did not note that Epiphanios had also been *synkellos* before he was appointed patriarch.[40] The *Chronographia* seems to have had an explicit interest in highlighting (or even creating) precedents for the path from *synkellos* to patriarch.

In addition to such anecdotes, we have explicit evidence for how the *synkellos* was ranked within ninth and tenth century imperial administrations. First, the *De Ceremoniis* (attributed to emperor Constantine VII, r. 945–959) preserves the tenth-century ritual and ceremony for the appointment of new *synkelloi*. The very fact that this ritual is included confirms the office was an imperial prerogative.[41] We can find a more specific register of the rank of the *synkellos* within the imperial hierarchy through documents called *taktika* (sing. *taktikon*), lists composed by palatine servants to ensure imperial ceremonies reflected official precedence. One, the *Uspenskij Taktikon*, may have been written contemporaneously with the *Chronographia*. Traditionally dated to the beginning of Michael III's reign (842–843), a recent argument by Tibor Živković places it in the reign of Michael I (812/13).[42] The list is a simple composition in its format, arranging officials and dignitaries below the emperor in descending rank (table 2.1). It is worth spending a few moments interpreting what this sparse list would have meant in practice. We can begin with the point that the *synkellos* appears as the eighth entry:

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40   MS 253 / dB 166 (AM 6012) claims that Epiphanios, appointed by Emperor Justin in 520, was also drawn from the *synkelloi* of the patriarchal church of Hagia Sophia. Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 253 note b, identify the sources for this passage as the *Chronicle* of Jacob of Edessa and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Zacharias of Mytilene. However, the information about Epiphanios' position as *synkellos* prior to his election as patriarch is not found in the surviving versions of these texts. See: E. W. Brooks, trans., "Chronicon Iacobi Edesseni," in *Chronica minora, pars tertia*, ed. E. W. Brooks, Ignatius Guidi and Jean-Baptiste Chabot, CSCO Syr III.4 (Paris: E typographeo Reipublicae, 1905–1907), 317 (Syriac), 239 (Latin); and, the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Zacharias of Mytilene in E. W. Brooks, ed. and trans., *Historia ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta II*, CSCO 84, 88, Syr 39, 42 [= Syr III.5] (1924; repr., Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1953), 62 (Syriac), 42.20–22 (Latin); English translation in F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks, trans. *The Syriac Chronicle Known as That of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London: Methuen & Co., 1899), 189–90.

41   *De ceremoniis* 2.5. Ed. Johann J. Reiske, *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo*, CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1829), 530.6–532.4.

42   Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 41. See now: Tibor Živković, "Uspenskij's Taktikon and the Theme of Dalmatia," *Byzantina Symmeikta* 17 (2007): 49–85.

TABLE 2.1   First eight ranks under Emperor Michael I in the *Uspenskij Taktikon* f. 194r

Greek Title	English Equivalent	Notes / Description
Ὁ πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως	Patriarch of Constantinople	Head of church administration, worship, doctrine
Ὁ Καῖσαρ	*Kaisar*	Honorific title, usually emperor's son(s)
Ὁ Νωβελίσσιμος	*Nobelissimos*	Honorific title, usually imperial family
Ὁ Κουροπαλάτης	*Kuropalates*	Head of bodyguard, usually imperial family
Ἡ Ζωστὴ Πατρικία	*Zoste Patrikia*	Honorific title: "Mistress of the Robes" A select handmaiden of the empress[a]
Ὁ Μάγιστρος	*Magistros*	Honorific position, previously Latin *Magister militum* Advisor to the emperor; often regent for a child emperor
Ὁ Ραίκτωρ	*Rector*	In our period evolving from an office to an honorific position. Duties unclear but possibly financial in nature[b]
Ὁ Σύγκελλος	*Synkellos*	(*as yet unclear*)

a   First attested in 830 for Theoktiste, mother of Theodora who won an imperial Bride Show to be empress with Theophilos. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 292–93.
b   Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 308.

The list continues in an undifferentiated manner, without making divisions between different groups or classes. We can conclude that, simply by virtue of his office, the ninth-century *synkellos* ranked at least eighth in the entire empire.[43]

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43   A point of clarification for those who may be unfamiliar with the distinction between "offices" and "honors" in the Byzantine empire. While for the highest-ranking individuals in the empire their office was equivalent to their dignity (no additional honorific title would move the *synkellos* higher on the above list), other lower-ranking officials could have their standing augmented by acquiring an honorific title. That is, as Alexander Kazhdan puts it, in this ninth-century "*taktika* system," dignities (honorific titles) and offices could be, and were, concurrent: honorifics and offices could overlap. An honorific could give to an office holder a rank not inherent to his office but deemed more fitting to his person. Alexander P. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. "Dignities and Titles."

We can confirm this reading with another hierarchical list. While the *Uspenskij Taktikon* did not distinguish any groups within the highest-ranking figures in the list above, the expanded text of the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (written in September 899) did. Philotheos' text indicates how rankings corresponded to the physical layout of the court by distinguishing groups of diners beginning with the imperial table.[44] When the *Kletorologion* notes instances where this hierarchy could be flexible, it is to the even greater benefit of the *synkellos*. While in general the *magistros* ranked above the *synkellos*, in cases of international diplomacy the *synkellos* received a temporary promotion to the fifth- or sixth-highest rank, guaranteeing this figure would be present at the imperial table for state dinners with foreign ambassadors.[45] Something like this arrangement must have been the case for the earlier part of the century as well. We can therefore propose that (if we exclude honorifics specifically designated for the emperor's family) in the early ninth century the *synkellos* was the second highest-ranking official in the Byzantine empire.[46]

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44   Philotheos was an *atriklines* (ἀτρικλίνης), a relatively low-ranking imperial functionary who oversaw the arrangement of the constant succession of imperial banquets. According to his preface, he had been called upon by his friends to produce a document that would clarify the system of precedence at the court of Leo VI (r. 886–912).

45   Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 3. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 163.10, and see especially 162n129 with Oikonomides' clarification.

46   Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 1. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 101.1–4, and also 303 for a comparison of all surviving ninth and tenth-century hierarchical lists. Over the course of 150 years the *synkellos* fluctuated between the second and third-highest official (a position maintained for nearly a century), finally dropping to the fourth rank. See also Constantine VII's *De ceremoniis* 2.52 in Reiske, *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae*, 713, 727. For a negative assessment of this rise, see Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, 35. But the argument for the early ninth-century *synkellos* ranking even higher, as high as second overall, would be as follows. The first five individuals joined the imperial couple on a regular basis. These were: the patriarch, *Kaisar*, *nobelissimos*, *kuropalates*, *zoste patrikia*, and the *basileopator* (ὁ βασιλεοπάτωρ), an additional title created by Leo VI in 888/9 for his father-in-law Stylianos Zaoutzes. See: Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines*, 307; and Alexander P. Kazhdan and Anthony Cutler, *ODB* s.v. "Zaoutzes, Stylianos." Then, Philotheos designated a second order as substitutes: the *magistros*, *rector*, and *synkellos*. See: Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 2. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 135.27–137.14. Since, in the time of George Synkellos, two of the titles at Philotheos' head table did not exist (*zoste patrikia* and *basileopator*) the *magistros* and *rector* must have been first-table regulars with the *synkellos* either joining them or sitting at the head of a second table set to move up in case of an absence. Emphasizing how often this may have happened, in the *Life* of St. Euthymios (Patriarch Euthymios I, r. 907–912), we find a *synkellos* who was very close to the emperor. In this case, the emperor Leo was not satisfied until he had made his ascetic *synkellos* agree to dine at the imperial table at least once a month. Patricia Karlin-Hayter, ed. and trans., *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP*, Bibliothèque de Byzantion 3 (Brussels: Éditions de Byzantion, 1970), 23. The appointment of Euthymios

This proposal can be verified by the manner in which the *synkellos* was included on the imperial dole. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos placed the office of *synkellos* conspicuously high in its description of the annual imperial ceremonial disbursement. Each year, on the anniversary of her or his accession, the emperor would award promotions and distribute imperial largess. The highest payments given by the emperor were to the *magistros* and *patrikia zoste*, appointments for the imperial family. Immediately following came the reward for an appointment as *synkellos*:

> At the nomination of a *synkellos* the customary gift, 12 nomismata, is given them once by [the emperor].[47]

The group of those who were given twelve nomismata also included anyone appointed to the dignity of *anthypatos* or *patrikios* (senatorial ranks), those appointed *strategos* (the governor-general of a *thema* or province), and the patriarch.[48] The *synkellos* was singled out as an imperial official within a class that included the empire's generals, its senators, and the patriarch himself.

The increased practical function of the *synkellos* in diplomacy indicates the degree to which emperors believed they could rely on their *synkelloi*, trusting them to negotiate on behalf of the emperor. Emperors presumably trusted in their *synkelloi* because a *synkellos* could be controlled by discretionary appointment. There was nothing to stop an emperor from dismissing his *synkelloi* and appointing new ones.

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was Leo's way of both giving his advisor's counsel weight, and of ensuring their frequent association and contact. Thus, at this high imperial table, the early ninth-century *synkellos* would have joined the empire's two highest dignitaries (the *caesar* and *nobelissimos*) the emperor's chief advisor (*magistros*), the patriarch, the head of the palace guard (*kuropalates*), and the head of finance (*rector*). Of these figures, only the *rector* and the *synkellos* were truly official positions rather than honorary dignities.

47　Τιμωμένου δὲ συγκέλλου δίδοται αὐτοῖς συνήθεια παρ' αὐτοῦ καθάπαξ νομίσματα ιβ′. Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 4. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 231 12–13.

48　The *strategoi* would also receive 12 nomismata each time they returned to the capital (which was presumably in the case of a triumph). Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 4. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 231.14–23. The *Life* of St. Euthymios confirms that by the early tenth-century emperors were also granting *synkelloi* membership in the senate, emphasizing the political role the *synkellos* had come to fill by this period. Though he thrived a century later than George the Synkellos, the life and career of St. Euthymios (eventually patriarch of Constantinople, 907–912) as the "spiritual director" of Leo VI, a post which he fulfilled as *hegoumenos* of the imperial monastery of Psamathia and as *synkellos* emphasises the political role the *synkellos* had come to fill. Euthymios' appointment to the post of *synkellos* was an act of emperor, senate, and also the patriarch. See: Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, 21.12–23.11.

It is outside the scope of the present section to dwell too long on the coherence of the relationship between emperor and *synkellos* in the context of our understanding of the nature of imperial power in Constantinople from the eighth century and into the ninth. However, it is worth noting that the emperor's apparent use of his relationship with patriarchal *synkelloi* to collaborate and negotiate or, if necessary, control and discipline the patriarchate may owe its full development to the very dynasty against which the *Chronographia* directs much of its rhetorical power, the Isaurians. In a comprehensive study of the Isaurian legal tradition, M. Humphreys recently confirmed M.-F. Auzépy's general characterization of the Isaurians as combating the centripetal tendencies of the empire with centrifugal solutions.[49] The iconoclast emperors reasserted their role within the church, famously epitomized in Leo III's supposed claim: "I am emperor and priest."[50] At the same time, through this period the ecclesiastical leaders were reasserting their authority as independent of the *imperium*, exemplified perhaps most clearly in the calls for church-wide elections of patriarchs, most memorably after the appointment of Nikephoros I (r. 806–815), and Methodios (r. 843–847).[51] According to G. Dagron's classic synthesis, the late ninth century saw the creation of priest-kings to stand up to king-priests.[52]

This context confirms the stakes in what I have been asserting thus far: the office of the *synkellos* would have been a key tool in any contest over the course of this period's power plays between emperor and patriarch. For a ninth-century reader attuned to the changing political landscape around them, knowing that the account of all time from the Creation of the world up to the present year of the Roman empire in the city of Constantinople was written by a *synkellos* would have raised the implicit political stakes invested in the work. I will repeat an earlier hypothesis but now with more force: it is not sufficient to think of the authorial *synkellos* as an assistant to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Instead, a *Chronographia* written by a *synkellos* would be

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49   Marie-France Auzepy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 286–87.

50   M. T. G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era: c. 680–850*, OSB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 266. See fundamentally Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 173–91.

51   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 223–26.

52   Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 229–35. Specifically, between the patriarchal reigns of Photios (r. 858–867; 877–886) and Nicholas Mystikos (r. 901–925).

read as a text with much to say about the figure of the emperor. And indeed, the progression of anecdotes concerning *synkelloi* in the *Chronographia* would lead to a point that made it very clear what the imperially-appointed authorial *synkellos* had to say about the present emperor.

3   **The *synkelloi* of the *Chronographia* and the Revolt of AM 6300 (AD 808)**

Synkelloi play an important role in the narrative of the *Chronographia* in three distinct places. In its narrative of the first quarter of the sixth century the *Chronographia* associates the rise of a *synkellos* to the patriarchal office in a manner which would seem to present imperial *synkelloi* succeeding to the patriarchate as a model for promoting orthodox doctrine.[53] However, this model is directly contradicted when a *synkellos* next appears in the narrative. According to the *Chronographia*, in the eighth century the emperor Leo III used his *synkellos* Anastasios to manipulate the patriarch Germanos so effectively that Germanos was forced to resign.[54] The editorializing narrative of the *Chronographia* makes it clear that the office of *synkellos* was perfectly suited to the sort of machinations Leo III needed at his disposal in order to take over the patriarchate.[55]

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53   Discussed in section 2, above. These successions are recorded under the entries for AM 6010 and AM 6012 respectively. John of Cappadocia (in AM 6010 or AD 517) affirmed the statement of faith from the Council of Chalcedon (451), which brought about a reunification with the Bishop of Rome. John of Cappadocia's successor was Epiphanios (in AM 6012 or AD 520). Epiphanios followed the exact same career trajectory, moving directly from *synkellos* of Constantinople to Patriarch, and is associated by the *Chronographia* with the restoration of an ecumenical orthodoxy in the capital.

54   Leo's predecessor appointed Germanos patriarch in 715. When hostility arose between Leo and Germanos over the veneration of icons, the *synkellos* Anastasios was caught in the middle, with Leo setting up the deposition of Germanos by scheming with his *synkellos*. Leo had insisted that Germanos make a written declaration of faith regarding icons. Germanos refused to do so without calling a full ecumenical council, so Leo waited for Germanos to say something against him. The *Chronographia* claims that "in this [the emperor] had an ally and a partner in the person of Anastasios, pupil and *synkellos* of Germanos, to whom [Leo III] had promised (inasmuch as Anastasios shared his impiety) to make him succeed adulterously to the episcopal throne." ἔχων εἰς τοῦτο σύμμαχον καὶ σύμμέτοχον Ἀναστάσιον μαθητὴν καὶ σύγκελλον αὐτοῦ, συνταξάμενος αὐτῷ ὡς τῆς ἀσεβείας ὁμόφρονι, καὶ τοῦ θρόνου μοιχὸν διάδοχον ἔσεσθαι. MS 564 / dB 407–8 (AM 6221).

55   The *Chronographia* explains it was Anastasios the *synkellos*' "adulterous loyalty" to the emperor—adulterous because the emperor is a heretic—which made him ensure the

The *Chronographia* then connects patriarch Anastasios' rise to power over the *ecclesia* (r. 730–754) to how the arch-iconoclast Constantine V controlled the patriarchate. Anastasios remained in office until 754 but his retention of the bishopric through the transition from Leo III to Constantine V was no victory for the authority of the church. The *Chronographia* claims Anastasios ended his career as patriarch with the church of Constantinople more under the control of the emperor than ever before. Anastasios' path from *synkellos* to patriarch would thus not be read as an example of a successful *synkellos* proving the independent power of the *ecclesia* but of the opposite: how the office could be used by an emperor to control the patriarchate.[56] The *Chronographia*'s narrative makes Anastasios the patriarch subject to the *imperium* in the same way Anastasios the *synkellos* had been subject to the emperor. The rhetoric in this section assumes its audience would expect a *synkellos* to have a great deal of influence, but would also be outraged at a *synkellos* too much in the pocket of an evil emperor. This high expectation for moral fiber was established by the earlier anecdotes in the *Chronographia* where the *synkellos* was willing to stand up to their lord and master the emperor to the point of death.

The very last example we have of a *synkellos* in the *Chronographia* is the only one where the *synkellos* acts in loyalty to the patriarch's interests *over* those of the emperor. The story is near the end of the *Chronographia* in the entry for

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patriarch's attendance at the *silentium* council of January 730 in which Germanos was formally presented with a statement concerning icons. When Germanos could no longer avoid the issue, he resigned as patriarch and so "Anastasios, the spurious pupil and *synkellos* of the blessed Germanos, who had adopted Leo's impiety, was ordained and appointed false bishop of Constantinople on account of his worldly ambition." χειροτονοῦσιν Ἀναστάσιον τὸν ψευδώνυμον μαθητὴν καὶ σύγκελλον τοῦ αὐτοῦ μακαρίου Γερμανοῦ συνθέμενον τῇ Λέοντος δυσσεβείᾳ, διὰ φιλαρχίαν κοσμικὴν προχειρισθεὶς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ψευδεπίσκοπος. MS 565 / dB 409 (AM 6221).

56   In the civil war between Artabasdos (married to Leo III's daughter Anna) and Constantine V (Leo III's son) patriarch Anastasios sided with Artabasdos. When Constantine gained victory, he publicly humiliated Anastasios but still kept him in office as patriarch. It seems the *Chronographia*'s account of Anastasios publicly whipped and then paraded through the city naked and seated backwards on a donkey was in fact inflicted upon patriarch Anastasios' successor, Constantine. Nevertheless, regardless of Anastasios' public and dramatic participation in this untoward ass parade, the point is to depict Anastasios as indebted to and thus fully under the control of Constantine V. Paul Speck, *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren: Untersuchungen zur Revolte des Artabasdos und ihrer Darstellung in der byzantinischen Historiographie*, Poikila Byzantina 2 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1981), 37–41 and 72n243; and, Speck, *Kaiser Leon III.*, 504–505. A synthesis is in: Ilse Rochow, "Anastasios (730–754)," in *Die Patriarchen der ikonoklastischen Zeit: Germanos I.–Methodios I. (715–47)*, ed. Ralph-Johannes Lilie, BBS 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 26.

AM 6300 (AD 807–808). This date stands out because it is the year in which George the Synkellos stated that he began to write the *Chronographia*. For this reason, before even considering what this entry had to say about a *synkellos* it is essential to note that an attentive reader was invited to connect the authorial *synkellos* with the *synkellos* of this entry through the striking coincidence that this entry is for the exact year in which the text states the author began writing. Any imaginative reader would implicitly identify this anonymous *synkellos* with the authorial *synkellos*.

The argument for the years during which George wrote the *Chronographia* is as follows. Modern scholarship has identified not only a *terminus post quem* but a *terminus ante quem* from (apparently accidental) conflicting information in one of the first sentences of the *Chronographia*:

> I entreat Christ our God … that I may make known whatever notable events took place in the intervening period of time [from the Creation of the world up to the Incarnation] involving nations and kingdoms, and *in the succeeding 802 years* [from the Incarnation] … that is, dating from the first-created day *up to AM 6300*, the 1st year of the indiction, as is indicated below.[57]

George the Synkellos' 802 years from the date of the Incarnation is equivalent to our AD 808. AM 6300 is our AD 810. These are not the same year. In 1932 R. Laqueur argued that these dates should be taken as the dates in which George began (AD 808), and then finally had to give up on (AD 810) his project.[58] Laqueur's idea was that when George first penned this passage, he wrote the current year as AM 6300 (or 800 years from his Incarnation date, our AD 808). A statement late in the *Chronography* indicates that at one point in AD 810 (his 6302/802) George was still intending to fulfill his plan and bring the text from the Creation to Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, to Augustus Caesar, Diocletian, and finally "up to our current 6302nd year."[59] Apparently

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57 ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ καινὴν κτίσιν Χριστὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν συνεργῆσαί μοι τῷ ἀμαθεστάτῳ, ὥστε σαφῶς ἀποδεῖξαι τῷ ͵εφ΄ ἔτει τοῦ κόσμου τὴν ἔνσαρκον αὐτοῦ γεγενῆσθαι οἰκονομίαν, καὶ ὅσα ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ χρόνῳ γέγονεν ἐπίσημα πράγματα περί τε ἔθνη καὶ βασιλείας καὶ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ὀκτακοσίων δύο ἐτῶν, λγ΄ μὲν ἐτῶν καὶ ἡμερῶν μ΄τῆς ἐπὶ γῆς οἰκονομίας, ἑπτακοσίων δὲ καὶ ξϛ΄ καὶ μηνῶν ι΄ καὶ ἡμερῶν κ΄ τῶν μετὰ τὴν ἁγίαν αὐτοῦ ἀνάληψιν, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ἀπὸ τῆς πρωτοκτί-στου ἡμέρας ἕως τοῦ κοσμικοῦ καθολικοῦ ͵ϛτ΄ ἔτους ἰνδικτίωνος α΄, ὡς ὑποτέτακται. AT 3 / M 2. Emphasis mine.

58 Richard Laqueur, "George Synkellos," in *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alter-tumswissenschaft*, vol. 4A (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1932), 1398. Laqueur's argument has remained unchallenged.

59 καὶ αὖθις ἕως τοῦ παρόντος ͵ϛτβ΄ ἔτους. AT 301 / M 244.

at that point he went back and corrected one but not the other of these initial statements of the current year, an elegant solution which both explains the internal inconsistency in the above quotation and gives us the years during which George wrote: from AD 808–810.[60]

As noted in the Introduction, an important supplemental point that can be derived from this information is that the exchange from George to Theophanes who would complete the project took place in AD 810 (the text's AM 6302/802). That is, based on the evidence in Theophanes' *Preface*, George had to stop writing before completing the project because his health allowed him to do no more.[61] By that point he had at least written the portion of the *Chronography* that covers the period of the Creation of the world up to the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (his AM 5777, and our AD 284).[62]

Regardless, for a reader to make something of the coincidence of an authorial *synkellos* and the appearance of a *synkellos* in the narrative for AM 6300 they would not even need to be attentive enough to make the same deduction as did R. Laqueur. Simply noticing the coincidence between the explicit date of composition by a *synkellos* and the last mention of a *synkellos* in the text would change how a reader would approach the entry in question. And, based on the foregoing analysis, it would be entirely possible that a reader could imagine this *synkellos* to be the historical George the Synkellos.

It is true that Tarasios was no longer patriarch in AD 808, having passed away in AD 806, and that every version of the text that survives proclaims that George to very specifically be the "*synkellos* of the Patriarch Tarasios." But the *Chronographia* leaves its audience in the dark as to whether George held the office of *synkellos* for some or all of the time Tarasios was patriarch (from 784 to 806), and whether he continued in that position after Tarasios' death. Tarasios' patriarchate includes the reigns of Constantine VI (r. 780–797), his mother the

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60   Note that a reiteration of the same "present" *annus mundi* a few pages after the first mention of it confirms that "AM 6300" was original and not merely a later scribal mistake: "the current year, the 6300th from the creation of the universe, the 1st year of the indiction." ἕως τοῦ νῦν ἐνεστῶτος ͵ϛτ′ ἔτους ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου ἰνδικτίωνος α′. AT 8 / M 6.

61   MS 1 / dB 3.

62   Despite this passage and the dates George the Synkellos supplied, C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lx–lxi) speculate that George the Synkellos lived on another three years until 813. George bequeathed Theophanes the finished portion along with some start on what remained—either as notations, excerpts, or drafts. As discussed in chapter 8 section 2, based on the distinct narrative voice from AM 6303 (AD 810/11), I favor the theory that Theophanes organized and/or edited the work from the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine I up to 810, and then added entries for AM 6303–6305 (AD 810–813).

Empress Irene (empress consort 775–780; empress regent 780–795; empress confined 795–796; co-empress 796–797; empress regnant 797–802), and the Emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811). One could argue that there is good reason to think George was appointed by Constantine VI in 796, but any of these emperors *could* have made George *synkellos* to Tarasios.[63]

For our reading of the *Chronographia*'s portrayal of the authorial *synkellos* it does not matter so much which ruler appointed George as which ruler dismissed him. Could not George have been remembered as the "*synkellos* to Tarasios" and yet have also remained in that office in 806 when Tarasios' reign ended and Nikephoros was promoted from *orphanotrophos* to Patriarch? The *Chronographia* identifying George the Synkellos specifically as the *synkellos* of Tarasios could be less a claim about the dates George was in office than a statement of political and religious allegiance between the author with the person and policies of Tarasios (and therefore Irene). We need to determine whether a ninth-century reader could imagine the authorial *synkellos* "of Tarasios" continuing to serve past Nikephoros (the *orphanotrophos*) ascending to Patriarch of Constantinople, and then up to AD 808.

Applying what we know about the nature of the office makes this seem quite possible. First, recall that *synkelloi* were not necessarily replaced at the changeover of a patriarch or emperor. Though it might seem unusual for a *synkellos* to remain after the election of a new patriarch, the primary reason we have seen for appointing new *synkelloi* was the need to ensure a patriarch would be obedient to the wishes of the emperor. George being dismissed from the imperially appointed office of *synkellos* would have depended on an emperor (and not a patriarch) deciding that he did not serve that emperor's interests.[64] Given what the *Chronographia* tells us, is there any point when a reader might have thought George was dismissed as *synkellos* before AD 808?

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63   AD 796 coheres with the *Chronographia*'s anecdote about the rediscovery of the relics of Euphemia in that same year, and its partiality to the reign of Irene (on which, see chapter 6) indicates an identification with the ruling regime from AD 796 at least through the reign of Irene.

64   The reason it has been presumed a new patriarch would mean new *synkelloi* is first that *synkelloi* have been thought to be a position *within* the ecclesiastical hierarchy (and so appointed at the patriarch's behest), and secondly that they often (if not usually) became the new patriarch upon the current patriarch's death or deposition. The first reason has been shown to be based on false premises. As for the second, the appointment of a former *synkellos* as patriarch would, by necessity, occasion the appointment of a new *synkellos*, but in the case of the election of Nikephoros I, the emperor bypassed the *synkelloi* and chose his new patriarch from the rank of *orphanotrophos*. There was no pressing need for the emperor Nikephoros I to appoint new *synkelloi* for the patriarch Nikephoros I.

In the absence of any other evidence, readers might speculate whether George would have been dismissed in 802 (with the coup of Nikephoros I over Irene), or in 806 (at the death of the patriarch Tarasios and the appointment of Nikephoros I as his successor). The *Chronographia* has a highly positive portrayal of the person and policies of Empress Irene (see chapter 6) and does not give any reason to assume Irene sacked George. Readers are thus permitted to think of George as serving as Irene's *synkellos* to Tarasios at least up until the coup of Nikephoros I in AD 802. Leaving this transition unremarked upon can be read as an invitation to assume the emperor Nikephoros I suspected he could fully trust his *synkellos* George. There is no indication the emperor needed new *synkelloi* willing to harass the elderly patriarch Tarasios in order to force policies through.

Neither is the reader given any reason to think the *synkellos* was deposed in AD 806—the year of Tarasios' death and the appointment of Nikephoros the *orphanotrophos* (manager of the public orphanage) to serve as patriarch. There is actually a reason to think this option quite unlikely. We have seen that *synkelloi* often (if not usually) became patriarch, and so the *synkellos* of Constantinople must have been a leading (if not *the* leading) candidate to succeed Tarasios to the patriarchal throne. However, the *Chronographia* evinces no bitterness but rather support towards the new patriarch Nikephoros. The elite audience of the *Chronographia* would have been fully attuned to the political nuances of the fact that the *synkellos* (the presumed author) had been passed over for the office of patriarch. The *Chronographia* is silent on the fact that the new patriarch was, unusually, chosen from the office of *orphanotrophos*. We might read this as implying that the authorial *synkellos* was at least acquiescent in being passed over in favor of the *orphanotrophos*.[65]

The final reason to assume that the *synkellos* of AD 808 would be presumed by readers to be George and not a new appointee by emperor Nikephoros was the very fact that this *synkellos* rebelled. The *synkellos* was appointed by the emperor and the very job of the *synkellos* was to promote the interests of the emperor in the patriarchate. It would be quite surprising that such a competent administrator and bureaucrat as emperor Nikephoros—the success of whose reign depended on his promotion of loyal bureaucrats—would choose someone to be his own *synkellos* in 806 who would in turn revolt

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65   The influence of the *orphanotrophos* and then patriarch Nikephoros (r. 806–815) upon the text and reception of the *Chronographia* has yet to be articulated. In several early manuscripts the *Chronographia* is preceded by regnal lists attributed to Nikephoros, the *Chronographikon Syntomon*. Nikephoros' own historical work has been published as Cyril A. Mango, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 10, CFHB 13 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990).

against him merely two years after being appointed, in 808. Thus, although the *Chronographia* ubiquitously identifies George as *synkellos* of Tarasios, the text also allows and permits its reader to assume George continued as *synkellos* past the death of patriarch Tarasios, and through the subsequent election of Nikephoros I as patriarch. The *Chronographia* in fact invites its audience to take the authorial *synkellos* as the *synkellos* of the entry for AD 808.[66]

We finally come to the significance of the fact that if the authorial *synkellos* and the *synkellos* of AM 6300 are the same, then the *synkellos* who wrote the *Chronographia* helped to stage an attempted coup against the emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811). Granting the arguments that have been laid out over the course of this chapter, I read the text of the entry AM 6300 (AD 807–808) as turning the tables on readers' expectations for a *synkellos*. Meant to be the emperor's man in the patriarchate, this *synkellos* helped lead a revolt:

> In the month of February (AD 808) many officials planned a revolt against [Nikephoros I] and conferred their choice on the *quaestor* and *patrician* Arsaber, a pious and cultivated man. But when the resourceful [scheming] Nikephoros had been informed of this, he had [Arsaber] scourged and tonsured and—having made him a monk—exiled him to Bithynia; whilst the others he punished with lashes, banishment, and confiscation—not only secular dignitaries, but also holy bishops, and monks, and the clergy of the Great Church, including the *synkellos*, the *sakellarios*, and the *chartophylax*, men of high repute and worthy of respect.[67]

The *Chronographia* sets a reader up to view the *synkellos* who rebelled in 808 as an unexpected hero, showing the moral backbone to rebel against his lord and master the emperor by suffering whipping, seizure of property, and exile.

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66 There are valid points to be made against such a reading's historicity as regards the actual person George the Synkellos. Nevertheless, I am interested here in what the reader is invited to presume about the text's author. For the argument against taking George the Synkellos as the *synkellos* of the 808 revolt see: Constantin Zuckerman, "Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler, or, A Story of Square Brackets," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 47–48.

67 τῷ δὲ Φεβρουαρίῳ μηνὶ στάσιν ἐννοήσαντες κατ' αὐτοῦ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει Ἀρσαβήρ, τὸν κυαί-στωρα καὶ πατρίκιον, ἄνδρα εὐσεβῆ καὶ λογιώτατον ἐψηφίζοντο. γνοὺς δὲ τοῦτο ὁ πολυμήχανος Νικηφόρος, αὐτὸν μὲν τύψας καὶ ἀποκείρας μοναχὸν πεποίηκεν, ἐν Βιθυνίᾳ τοῦτον ἐξορίσας, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς δαρμοῖς καὶ ἐξορίαις, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δημεύσεσι καθυπέβαλεν, οὐ μόνον τοὺς ἐν τῷ κοσμικῷ βίῳ ἄρχοντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπισκόπους ἁγίους καὶ μοναχοὺς καὶ τοὺς τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλη-σίας, τόν τε σύγκελλον καὶ τὸν σακελλάριον καὶ τὸν χαρτοφύλακα, ἄνδρας ἐλλογίμους ὑπάρχο-ντας καὶ αἰδοῦς ἀξίους. MS 664 / dB 483.23–484.2 (AM 6300).

To decide what to make of the authorial *synkellos*, a reader has to decide what to make of the *synkellos* who rebels against the emperor Nikephoros I. The account in the *Chronographia* is so sympathetic to the 808 revolt, and would be so antagonistic to the emperor Nikephoros I (see chapter 7), that the entire account of the reign of Nikephoros I reads as an apology or even manifesto for revolt written in the immediate aftermath of the *synkellos*' punishment and exile.[68] Regardless of whether or not this historical *synkellos* of AD 808 *is*—in actual historical fact—the historical person of George the Synkellos does not matter for my present purpose: what matters is that the reader is invited to make this assumption.[69] The *Chronographia* encourages its readers to associate the rebellious *synkellos* of AM 6300 with the composition of the text as a whole.

4   The Associates of the *Synkellos* in the Revolt of AD 808

The revolt of 808 has been characterized as an ineffective revolt of ecclesiastical officials with little to no broad backing who may even have lacked the support of the patriarch.[70] However, the offices held by the rebels who are mentioned communicates to us that the conspiracy extended deeply not only into the patriarchate, but also into the civic and imperial bureaucracies. If, as has already been posited, emperor Nikephoros I did not clean out the patriarchal administration when he appointed Nikephoros I to be patriarch in 806, then the rebels within the patriarchate are to be associated with the previous administration: with the Patriarch Tarasios and the policies of Empress Irene. I will return to this argument more fully in chapter 8. For now I use the figures (including the *synkellos*) whom the *Chronographia* associates with the rebellion as evidence that the failed revolt of 808 was a revolt of civic officials incensed at the emperor's fiscal policies and was supported by a significant contingent of the armed forces around Constantinople.

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68   L. Brubaker and J. Haldon suggest "opposition both to the emperor's fiscal as well as his religious/ecclesiastical policies" in Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 361.

69   "Even if the *synkellos* who was so punished was not George, but his successor, the emperor's retribution fell on George's friends and colleagues in the patriarchal clergy." Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lviii.

70   Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*, 74; Warren T. Treadgold, "The Revival of Byzantine Learning and the Revival of the Byzantine State," *American Historical Review* 84, no. 5 (1979): 1245–66, 153–54.

Four leading rebels are identified, and all but one are identified by their offices alone.[71] These offices included the head of the patriarchal finances (*sakellarios*) and the patriarch's head archivist and notary (*chartophylax*). The other two were imperially appointed officials. We have already noted at length that the *synkellos* was the emperor's liaison to the patriarchate. And the lead rebel, the *quaestor* Arsaber, was appointed by the emperor as head of the civic court of appeals and edicts in Constantinople.[72] The leading rebels came from within the inner workings of the imperial administration as much as the patriarchal.

I turn first to the offices of patriarchal *sakellarios* and *chartophylax*. By the sixth century the office of *sakellarios* was important enough that its holders were considered for promotion to the patriarchal chair itself.[73] The patriarchal *sakellarios* was more powerful within the ecclesiastical administration

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71   P. Alexander noted that it is clear the chronicle omitted a significant number of names, Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*, 74.

72   The *Chronographia* is the only contemporary source to mention the discovery and punishment of Arsaber and the officials who planned to join his revolt against emperor Nikephoros I. Note also that the revolt of Arsaber has never been associated with any moment in the well-documented life of Theophanes. See the summary comparison of the two biographical accounts of Theophanes in Mango and Scott (Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xliv–lii): a panegyric by Theodore of Stoudios written in 822 (ed. Stéphane Efthymiadis, "Le Panégyrique de S. Théophane le Confesseur par S. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b) Édition critique du texte integral," *Analecta Bollandiana* 111, no. 3–4 [1993]: 259–90); and, a *Life* by Methodios (patriarch 843–847) written prior to 832 (ed. Basilius Latyšev, "Methodii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani: Vita S. Theophanis Confessoris e Codice Mosquensi n. 159," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie. Ser. 8: Classe Historico-Philologique* 13, no. 4 [1918]: 1–40).

73   The *Chronographia* records that in AD 606 (AM 6098) a certain Thomas served as deacon and *sakellarios* of Hagia Sophia before being ordained as patriarch. MS 422 / dB 293. On the office see: Franz Dölger, *Beitrage zur Geschichte der byzantinischen Finanzverwaltung besonders des 10. und 11. Jarhunderts*, 2nd ed., BYZARCH 9 (1927; repr., Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1960), 16–19; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines*, 312; Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, 310–14, 551, 556, 558, 561; Placido de Meester, ed. *De monachico statu: iuxta disciplinam byzantinam: statua selectis fontibus et commenatiis instructa: indices*, Codificzaione canonica orientale, Fonti series 2, fascicule 10 (Vatican City: Typis polyglottis vaticanis, 1942), 183–85. On the change of the office over time Laurent (*Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, no. 72) notes in reference to Gregory (a *sakellarios* in s. ix 2/2) that by the eleventh century the *sakellarios* lost his strictly financial responsibilities and was charged with "responsibility for the supervision of the monasteries of Constantinople" ... "to survey, inspect, and administer the monasteries, and to maintain the observation and guard of good order" especially the dispersion of the monastic houses to lay patrons such as the *ephoros* and *charistikion*. Alexander has this later role in mind when he discusses the rebellion, Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople*, 74.

than the imperial *sakellarios* was within the palace.[74] An eighth-century administrative division left the imperial *sakellarios* in charge of the emperor's private holdings only, while the public properties of the state were overseen by the *logothetes tou genikou*.[75] The ninth-century patriarchal *sakellarios* was, by contrast, fully in charge of the patriarchal treasury, something like a comptroller with subordinate notaries and *mandatores* representing him in each department (*sekreton*). As we will see in chapter 7, many of the *Chronographia*'s complaints against emperor Nikephoros focus on his taking oversight of public

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74   The imperial *sakellarios* was still a very powerful position: the *Chronographia* has Herakleios' seventh-century *sakellarios* Theodore leading an army on the emperor's behalf. MS 468–70 / dB 337–39 (AM 6125–6126). Nevertheless, in general the imperial *sakellarios* developed from a sixth or seventh-century official charged with oversight of the emperor's personal finances. The earliest officials we hear of are part of the "imperial bedchamber department," with simultaneous appointment as *sakellarios* and *spatharios*, or *sakellarios* and *koubikoularios*. See Alexander Kazhdan and Paul Magdalino, *ODB* s.v. 'sakellarios'; Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, nos. 737, 739–742, 744, 747. This relationship does not entirely disappear. Note a ninth-century seal of the *patrikios* Basil indicating that Basil is *chartoularios* of imperial *vestarion* as well as *sakellarios*. Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, no. 748. By the seventh century the *sakellarios* and the *logothetes tou genikou* seem to control the state finances together with a vague division between the *sakellarios* overseeing the *res privata* and the *logothetes* overseeing the *res publica*. Then, between the seventh and the ninth centuries this position gained increasing responsibility over imperial finances replacing the *comes sacrarum largitionum* and the *comes rei privatae*, Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 312 with n144.

75   The division roughly corresponded to the *res privata* (overseen by the *sakellarios*) and the *res publica* (overseen by the *logothetes*), or the emperor's private holdings vs. the properties of the state. Unlike this dichotomy in the imperial administration between the *sakellarios* as head of the "personal" finances of the emperor and the *logothetes tou genikou* over the "public" finances, the patriarchate had only the *sakellarios*. According to George and Theophanes, when the population of Constantinople revolted and disfigured Justinian II their anger focused primarily on Justinian's oppressive finance ministers, Theodore the imperial *sakellarios* and Stephen the *logothetes tou genikou*, who were dragged through the City and then burnt. MS 515 / dB 369 (AM 6187). Though this does not necessarily reflect perceptions in the seventh century (as J. B. Bury, *Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century; with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* [New York: B. Franklin, 1958], 85), by the time the chroniclers were writing in the eighth century they were certainly seen as "treasurers (*tamiai*) of the imperial funds." Mango, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople*, 23.12; 37.12–13. Ivan Jordanov, *Corpus of Byzantine Lead Seals from Bulgaria*, vol. 3.1 (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Science, National Institute of Archaeology with Museum, 2009), 315–16 notes that there are nearly enough surviving seals of ninth and tenth *sakellarioi* to piece together an unbroken succession of officeholders; note also the role of the position of *sakellarios* played in the tenth-century career of Joseph Bringas (p. 318). Wherein see the seals of John *patrikios, imp. spatharios, imp. sakellarios* (s. ix ½)—no. 873; and, Leo *patrikios, protospatharios, imp. sakellarios* (s. ix–x)—no. 879.

social services away from the patriarchal administration and bringing them under the control of the imperial administration. These reclamations would have specifically disenfranchised the power and authority of the patriarchal *sakellarios*.

According to the mid-tenth century (ca. 934–944) *Taktikon* of Beneševič, the *chartophylax* (χαρτοφύλαξ) was the fourth-highest ranking official in the patriarchal administration.[76] Though our understanding of the ninth-century functions of this official are more speculative, we know that in the tenth century the *chartophylax* introduced clerics at patriarchal and conciliar gatherings, received the patriarch's letters, examined candidates for the priesthood, and prepared candidates' testimonials.[77] More to the point, V. Laurent explains that the *chartophylax* was the "notary in charge of guarding the patriarchal archives" which meant that his office was granted authority to answer questions on canon law.[78] The *chartophylax* had the authority to answer judicial questions concerning canon law on the basis of his own judgement.[79] If the presence of the *sakellarios* in the AD 808 revolt against Nikephoros signalled an opposition to the emperor's restriction of the financial reach of the

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76   Ed. Oikonomìdès, *Listes de préséance byzantines*, 251.18–21.

77   Ruth J. Macrides, *ODB* s.v. "Chartophylax," and Geōrgios Alexandrou Rhallēs and Michaēl Potlēs, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θειῶν καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων τῶν τε ἁγίων καὶ πανευφήμων ἀποστόλων* [*Syntagma tōn theiōn kai hierōn kanonōn tōn te hagiōn kai paneuphēmōn apostolōn*], 6 vols. (1852–1859; repr., Athens: G. Chartophylakos, 1992), 2:587, 3:440–44. It is possible that we even know the identity of the *chartophylax* who revolted with George the Synkellos. Laurent catalogued a seal from the Vatican of an official whose name began Theo- (the remainder is damaged) and who was the deacon and *chartophylax*, presumably of Hagia Sophia. Dated to the end of eighth century on stylistic grounds, this Theodore (Theodotos, or even Theophanes) could well be the same individual. Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, no. 84, Vatican cabinet no. 157. Laurent makes a wild guess that this is a certain Theodore who we know was the *oikonomos* of Hagia Sophia in 824 and had advanced through the hierarchy over this period. Given that the *Chronicle* states clearly that the *chartophylax* was punished and exiled for the 808 revolt, this is highly unlikely.

78   Laurent, *Corpus des sceaux*, vol. 5.1, nos. 83–107. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the patriarchal *chartophylax* increased in prominence and importance, as did the fame of individual office holders. The authority of the *chartophylax* to comment on canonical law was confirmed by Alexios I in the eleventh century, see: Macrides, "Chartophylax"; Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, 334–53, 508–25.

79   Macrides, "Chartophylax" notes this official wrote *erotapokriseis* on canonical matters and released them in his own name ... [and] could represent Patriarch in synod in his absence. *Theodore Balsamon* asserted in his treatise on *protekdikos* that the official had judicial competence and presided over a court (Rhallēs and Potlēs, *Syntagma* 4:530–41). Macrides cautions that in this case Balsamon may simply be trying to bolster the office. Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ὀφφίκια de l'Eglise byzantine*, 334–53, 508–25; Meester, *De monachico statu*, 284.

patriarchate, the inclusion of the *chartophylax* would seem to signal opposition to Nikephoros' actions in the legal-judicial sphere. This hypothesis is seconded by the office of the conspirators' candidate for emperor, Arsaber the *quaestor*.

What did Arsaber's *office* of *quastor* mean to the audience of the *Chronographia*? The *quaestor* of Constantinople headed the civic court of appeals and edicts in Constantinople. This was the last court of appeals before the emperor's final judgment seat. The *quaestor* was the second-highest figure in the entire judicial hierarchy, and thirty-fourth overall among all officials.[80] In chapter 8 I will argue in more detail for further biographical details concerning Arsaber, and the relevance to the *Chronographia* of the groups with whom he seems to have been affiliated in early ninth-century Constantinople. For now I will only briefly mention two qualities about Arsaber, directly relevant to this chapter's point that the authorial persona associated the *Chronographia* with an extensive and broad-based critique of the emperor Nikephoros I.

The *Chronographia* gives us a coherent and specific reason for the *quaestor* to be profoundly opposed to the reign of Nikephoros I. First, the *Chronographia* makes Nikephoros' very first official recorded act to be the creation of a new court of imperial justice at the palace of the Magnaura.

> So when this universal devourer (ὁ παμφάγος) had seized power, he was unable even for a short time to hide by means of dissimulation his innate wickedness and avarice (κακία καὶ φιλαργυρία); nay, pretending to be about to eradicate injustice he set up that evil and unjust tribunal at the Magnaura ... not to give the poor (πτωχοί) their due, but by this means to dishonour and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything, which, indeed, he did.[81]

That is, Nikephoros I—as the very form of greed and antithesis of mercy— exemplified wickedness by bringing all judicial appeals brought to Constantinople behind the *Chalke* gate and into the imperial domain. By removing the customary first stage in the appellate process Nikephoros took

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80   Philotheos, *Kletorologion* 1. Ed. Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 101.35.
81   ὁ γοῦν παμφάγος οὗτος τοῦ κράτους ἐπιλαβόμενος οὐδὲ κἂν πρὸς βραχὺ ἴσχυσεν ἐπικαλύψαι δι' ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ κακίαν τε καὶ φιλαργυρίαν· ἀλλ' ὡς δῆθεν τὴν ἀδικίαν μέλλων ἐκκόπτειν τὸ πονηρὸν ἐν τῇ Μαγναύρᾳ καὶ ἄδικον συνεστήσατο δικαστήριον. σκοπὸς δὲ τῷ τυράννῳ οὐ τοῖς πτωχοῖς τὰ δίκαια ἀποδιδόναι, ὡς ἔδειξε τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτου πάντας τοὺς ἐν τέλει ἀτιμάσαι τε καὶ αἰχμαλωτίσαι, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα μετενεγκεῖν· ὃ καὶ πεποίηκεν. ms 657 / dB 478–479 (am 6295).

away the authority of the *quaestor* and brought the topography of justice entirely within the confines of the palace complex.[82]

It is important to note how the *Chronographia* glossed Nikephoros moving the court. The emperor pretended his deed would eradicate injustice but instead he established injustice; he pretended to help the poor (πτωχοί) but in truth he only wanted "to dishonor and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything." The *Chronographia* thus made the incident into a character trait set within its wider discourse on political ethics. The rhetoric of the *Chronographia* set up anyone who might want to oppose Nikephoros' action (such as a dispossessed *quaestor*) to be an actor against greed, and a supporter of justice for the poor.

But we can say much more about the figure of the *quaestor* because the *Chronographia* not only tells us that the *quaestor* rebelled, but who the *quaestor* was. We have a single surviving early ninth-century seal from Arsaber the *quaestor*, giving us external validation of the historicity of this figure.[83] Based on this seal we know that Arsaber's office was augmented by the fact that he had also acquired the senatorial dignity of *patrikios*.[84] The post-rebellion history of Arsaber, attested by two later texts, allows us to be more specific and place

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82 Christophilopoulou suggests that from a historical perspective, this act should be taken in the context of Nikephoros' other reforms. Aikaterina Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, trans. Timothy Cullen, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1993), 202.

83 *PmBZ* no. 597; Vitalien Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 2, *L'administration centrale* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1981), no. 1100 = George Zacos and Alexander Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, vol. 1.2, *Nos. 1096–2671A* (Basel: s.n., distributed by J. J. Augustin, 1972), no. 1735. There are three individuals from at least two different families who might also be traces of this same individual. Scholars have catalogued eighteen potentially-distinct individuals named Arsaber with a historical trace in the Byzantine world from this period, ca. 750–850. The *PmbZ* identifies most from inscriptions on lead seals and since individuals acquired a new stamp with each new office, a single individual could leave a number of unique seals over the course of their career.

84 It is worth noting that even with this dignity, the *quaestor* still ranked far below the *synkellos*. For instance, according to the mid-ninth-century *Uspenskij Taktikon*, a *synkellos* would not have benefitted in rank by also being a senator (*patrikios*). When historical *synkelloi*—such as Euthymios—were made *patrikios*, it was likely in order to explicitly signal the *synkellos'* ties to the imperial hierarchy. In the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (discussed above) twenty-six dignities (eighteen for "bearded men" and eight for eunuchs) are distinguished from about seventy offices (sixty for bearded men and ten for eunuchs). The first group were dignitaries (ἄξια διὰ λόγου) for life, while the second group were officials (ἄξια διὰ βραβείων) for as long as the emperor wished them to exercise their command. See the recent discussion in Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 591–615.

Arsaber into an important and elite network. Both the history of Theophanes
Continuatus and Genesios' mid-tenth-century *On the Reigns of Emperors* state
that Theodosia, the empress of Leo V (r. 813–820), was Arsaber's daughter.[85] We
are also told that another of Arsaber's children, Theophanes (not the chroni-
cler), attained the rank of *spatharios* under Leo V.[86] I will return to develop
the idea of the factions around the imperial palace to which Arsaber and his
children belonged in chapter 8 (section 1.4). For now: even though Arsaber's
revolt may have failed, merely five years after his banishment—and before the
Chronographia, our source on the revolt, had even been completed—Arsaber's
daughter would be the empress. That is: by 813 Arsaber's son Theophanes was
one of the emperor Leo V's closest advisors, and Arsaber's daughter was the
empress Theodosia, the empress reigning at the end of the *Chronographia*.
The rebel who was punished for revolting with the *synkellos* in AD 808 had
ascended to power through his children: by the time the *Chronographia* was
circulated its audience would have known the family of Arsaber as deeply
embedded in the innermost chambers of ultimate power.[87]

What does all of this communicate about how to read the *Chronographia*?
I began by arguing that in naming a few of the rebels of AD 808, the chronog-
rapher expected his contemporaries to pick up on what the *offices* signified.
Of all the "secular dignitaries, [and] also holy bishops, and monks, and the
clergy of the Great Church" who revolted against Nikephoros in AD 808, those
specifically mentioned were the *quaestor* (head of the civic court of appeals),
the *chartophylax* (the patriarch's chief legal officer and archivist), the *synkel-
los* (the emperor's man in the patriarchate), and the *sakellarios* (head of the
patriarchal finances). The emperor had downsized his judiciary and made his

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85   Theodosia = *PmbZ* 7790. See: Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, 1.18. Ed. Anthony
        Kaldellis, *Genesios on the Reigns of the Emperors*, BYZAUS 11 (Canberra: Australian
        Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998), 20; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronography* 1.22.
        Ed. [Jeffrey] Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer, eds., *Chronographiae quae
        Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, CFHB 53 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 56.32–
        42; John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057* (Cambridge:
        Cambridge University Press, 2011), 22 with n23.

86   See: Elizabeth A. Fisher, "Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople," in
        Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saint's Lives in English Translation, ed. Alice-Mary
        Talbot, BSLT 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 106n339 and 108.

87   Note that having a stake in this political life did not necessitate lining up *as a family* on
        one side or the other. In the 814/15 debate over icons, Arsaber's son Theophanes helped
        the emperor enforce his policy on the patriarch, but his daughter empress Theodosia
        had attempted to persuade the emperor to *not* adopt an iconoclast policy. Ninth-century
        political reality does not line up neatly with the simplistic iconoclast vs. iconophile divi-
        sion often imposed on this period.

quaestor Arsaber redundant. But this *quaestor* was not only justifiably incensed at his loss of prestige, but at the injustice at the heart of Nikephoros' action. Involving the patriarchal *chartophylax* indicates concern with the implications of Nikephoros' moves to the practice of law; including the *sakellarios* conveys dissatisfaction with the emperor's approach to ecclesiastical administration and finance. This is a revolt of the civic bureaucracy writ large, apparently incensed at the moral affronts in the emperor's fiscal policies towards the patriarchate, and at his legal policies in general.

Read in this way, the account of the revolt of AD 808 coincides perfectly with the rhetorical polemic that later chapters will show the *Chronographia* levelled against the policies of emperor Nikephoros I. The emperor had offended the church administrators who oversaw charity and law, whose task it was to safeguard the distribution of mercy and justice. And the rebels would be read as being in the right: an audience reading the text after 813 would know the leading rebel Arsaber as the eventual father-in-law to the emperor, Leo V, a rebel exonerated by God with a place within the inner palace.

5   The *Synkellos'* Imperial Critique

Any attempt to craft George's life story—to ask who was George the Synkellos?—is subject to the doubts evoked by W. Treadgold's reconstruction in *Middle Byzantine Historians*: entirely possible and even plausible, but without any possibility of verification.[88] Instead I have used the historical *literary* event of the text itself to ask two different questions. First, what would a ninth-century reader have thought upon opening a codex containing the *Chronographia*, reading the *incipit*, and learning that a *synkellos* wrote it? And second, given the *Chronographia* not only claimed a *synkellos* wrote it between AD 808–810, but also stated that a *synkellos* revolted against the emperor in that same year of AD 808, how was this text asking to be read? What was it about?

The *Chronographia* tells its ninth-century readers to read it as though a *synkellos* wrote it. I can now say some important things about what this means. This was a text written by one of the most influential men in the empire, one of the emperor's closest confidants and servants. The *synkellos* was the emperor's emissary to, and watchdog over, the branch of the bureaucracy that oversaw all sacred and social services, and all their attendant revenues. It was written

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88   Treadgold, *Middle Byzantine Historians*, 38–51; Treadgold, "Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus."

by a servant of the emperor often called upon to negotiate treaties, to head diplomatic missions, and to receive foreign ambassadors. It was written by a regular at the imperial banqueting table. It was written by an official in the most elite grouping of paid imperial servants, a grouping which included the imperial generals and the patriarch himself. The *synkellos* saw and served the emperor in an unparalleled range of contexts. If there was a man in the empire who knew something about what it meant, or should mean, or could mean, to be emperor, it was the *synkellos*. The authorial persona of the *synkellos* had the *auctoritas* to say something about the imperial office and the *Chronographia* was the specific way that he wanted to say it.

The *Chronographia* also leads its readers to believe that the *synkellos* who wrote it had a problem with his emperor. The author claimed to have been appointed *synkellos* of Tarasios and readers were left to imagine he remained in office through the deposition of Irene at the accession of Nikephoros I as emperor in 802, and the death of Tarasios and appointment of Patriarch Nikephoros I in 806. Readers were given every reason to connect the dots between the text's claim to have been written by a former *synkellos* between AD 808–810, and the *synkellos* who rebelled against emperor Nikephoros I in AD 808. The reader would infer that the *synkellos* wrote his *Chronographia*, his account of all time, in the aftermath of the revolt against Nikephoros I in order to explain that revolt. The authorial persona of the *Chronographia* had the intellectual weight of an informed insider and the moral weight of a martyr persecuted for righteousness' sake.

The *Chronographia* would present the empress Irene as embodying the model of a generous emperor who gave over authority to bishops and who suffered a bloodless martyrdom for the unity of the empire (as discussed in chapter 8). Irene's policies may well have been undertaken with the advice of her *synkellos*, George. This would explain why the entries just after AD 808 systematically attack the fiscal austerities by which Nikephoros overwrote the politics of fiscal mercy which the "most pious" Irene had just enacted at the end of her reign (AM 6290–6292). Regardless, the entire work's imperial ethic culminated in the reign of Nikephoros I (as chapters 5, 6, and 7 will demonstrate) to emphasize the consequences of imperial intervention in church policy and the repercussions of imperial greed. The *Chronographia* demanded opposition to Nikephoros and the policies he developed "for the gold he loved and not for Christ."[89] Arsaber the *quaestor*'s failed revolt against Nikephoros I functions coherently as the genesis for the entire *Chronographia* project.

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89   ὁ πάντα διὰ τὸν φιλούμενον αὐτῷ χρυσὸν καὶ οὐ διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν πράττων. MS 663 / dB 483
      (AM 6299).

The *Chronographia*'s claim that a *synkellos* wrote it does not so much reveal an authorial biography as a way to read the text. The text claimed to have been written by an imperial official with an intimate understanding of the workings of imperial power. The *Chronographia* implies that the specific *synkellos* who wrote it threw his life into an attempt to halt the policies and agenda of the figure it portrays as Antichrist: Nikephoros I, the All-Devourer. As we saw in chapter 1, the arrangement of the text in its earliest form did not convey the content as an uninterrupted succession of yearly entries (the only way that modern scholars have read the text), but rather as a succession of imperial portraits. This arrangement invited the reader to participate in the *synkellos*' critique of the evils of Nikephoros I by comparing his portrait to the types established by other emperors. The authorial persona of the *synkellos* thus established the stakes in reading the *Chronographia* by implicating the sympathetic reader in the moral justification of a rebellion against the emperor. The purpose of this work was not merely to lay out a persuasive account of past time for its own sake, but to explain how, why, and for what time mattered.

Thesis: The First-Created Day

Among medieval chronographies, the *Chronographia* project is uniquely theo-
retical. It not only contains explicit discussion of its method of synchroniz-
ing multiple records but also articulates an argument for the very nature of
time itself. This argument is encapsulated in the phrase, the First-Created Day.
As we will see, the Holy First-Created Day (ἡ ἀγία πρωτόκτιστος ἡμέρα) is,
from a linear chronological perspective, inherently paradoxical. Its definition
holds that the days of the Creation, of Noah's Exit from the Ark, of Christ's
Incarnation, and of Christ's Resurrection are all *dated* 1 Nisan, 29 Phamenoth,
and 25 March on (respectively) AM 1, AM 2243, AM 5500, and AM 5534. And it
holds that these are also "one and the same *day*." This was no supplemental
thesis to the *Chronographia*: the beginning of the *Chronography* (from AM 1)
and the beginning of the *Chronicle* (from AM 5434) stated that the First-Created
Day was the thesis or goal of the entire work. The aim of this chapter is to
explain the thesis and its significance for how we read the *Chronographia*.

 This chapter begins by formulating what the new idea of the First-Created
Day would have meant to its original ninth-century readers. Though we will
find the First-Created Day to be a truly ninth-century Byzantine idea—and
as such not easy to conceptually translate—the *Chronographia* seems to
anticipate that its contemporary audience would have been unfamiliar with
the phrase, if not the idea itself. According to searches performed through
the corpus of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* the First-Created Day is indeed
a neologism that was almost certainly invented by George the Synkellos for
the *Chronographia* itself.[1] To understand this concept we will work slowly and
carefully through the *Chronographia*'s explicit statements about this thesis.

 The concepts signaled by the *Chronographia*'s explanations of the First-
Created Day also signal an indigenous literary context in which to read and
interpret this new account of past time, for the work uses intertextual refer-
ences to explain the argument of the First-Created Day. These references not
only define the idea of the past contained in the thesis, but for our purposes can
indicate what kind of a work we are reading, for the *Chronographia* uses terms

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1 www.tlg.uci.edu. George Monachos, George the Synkellos' successor in universal chronicling
  who wrote around the 840s, used the phrase, though it did not play a central role in his
  conception of time. Karl de Boor and Peter Wirth, eds., *Georgii monachi chronicon*, BSGRT
  (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1978), 129.3, 177.27.

and concepts from non-historical genres to explain the First-Created Day. By providing us with conceptual precedents for the idea, these other genres—primarily homiletic and liturgical—also supply a literary context for how to make sense of the paradoxes wrought by bringing an indelibly theological idea into a chronology. Specifically, the *Chronographia*'s innovative genre-blending thesis of the First-Created Day invited its audience to find a new meaning in the temporal continuum of traditional chronography by reading chronological time through the typological relationship between past and present found in theologies and in liturgical commentaries.

1   What Did the First-Created Day Mean? A Reliable Chronology of Empire

1.1   *A Reliable Historical Time Backed by Scripture and Logic*

The *Chronographia* begins with an extended argument for the validity of the First-Created Day thesis. The argument would both define the idea and assert its authority by drawing upon the Septuagint and Aristotelian physics. The importance of the Septuagint to George the Synkellos' argument was already established in our analysis of his polemics against Eusebius.[2] Now it is possible to underscore this point by noting that the argument of the *Chronographia* is introduced by making the very first sentence of the entire work a quotation of the first sentence of the Greek Christian scriptures. The *Chronographia* literally predicated itself upon the Septuagint:

> In the beginning (ἀρχή) God created the heaven and the earth.[3]

The next words of the *Chronographia* defined this "beginning":

> [This] is the beginning (ἀρχή) of all chronological movement of the visible creation subject to time.... The holy First-Created Day.[4]

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2   See Introduction, and Patricia Varona, "Chronographical Polemics in Ninth-Century Constantinople: George Synkellos, Iconoclasm and the Greek Chronicle Tradition," *Eranos* 108 (2017): 126–32.

3   Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. AT 1 / M1.

4   ἀρχὴ πάσης χρονικῆς κινήσεως τῆς ὑπὸ χρόνον ὁρατῆς κτίσεώς ἐστιν.... ἡ ἁγία πρωτόκτιστος ἡμέρα. AT 1 / M1. Continuing: "... of the first month called Nisan by the Hebrews and the divinely inspired scriptures, corresponding to the 25th of the Roman month of March, and the 29th of the seventh Egyptian month."

This second sentence's commentary explains that the scriptural "beginning" is not merely conceptual, but the "visible creation subject to time": the beginning of chronology.

Though it may seem intuitive, this was an innovative claim in chronography. To my knowledge no previous chronographer had asserted that the coming into existence of matter, on the very first "day" of the account of creation in the *Book of Genesis* was the beginning of calculable time.[5] Instead, Christian chronographers and computists began calculations from the "fourth day," the day on which *Genesis* had said God created the sun, moon, stars and planets. Time, according to the thinking of chronographers, could not be known without the astronomical objects whose rotations and orbits they counted in order to create the ordered sequences of days and months and years.

George the Synkellos countered that the only philosophically sound approach to interpreting this first sentence of scripture was to begin chronological time with creation:

> It is abundantly clear that … heaven and the earth and the light and the darkness, both the spirit and the abyss,

that is, all created matter, came into being concurrently with

> the First-Created Day itself, which produces the beginning of temporal motion.[6]

The cosmological beginning of matter was also the first chronological (temporal) "day" of creation. As in the second sentence of the *Chronographia* (quoted above), the existence of matter marked the beginning of all chronic motion (χρονικὴ κίνησις) in the specifically defined field of the visible creation subject to time (χρόνος).

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5 George the Synkellos is extremely clear on this, repeatedly. Even in the latter part of the *Chronographia* he makes explicit his concern to distinguish the project from others' by making his reckoning of time coterminous ἐκ τῆς κοινῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ("from the genesis of the universal cosmos") or as W. Adler and P. Tuffin translate: "from the creation of the universe in its totality." AT 452 / M 378.16.

6 Πρόδηλον γὰρ … ὅτι ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸ φῶς καὶ τὸ σκότος, τὸ πνεῦμά τε καὶ ἡ ἄβυσσος καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ πρωτόκτιστον νυχθήμερον ὅπερ ἀρχὴ τῆς χρονικῆς κινήσεως πέφυκεν. AT 2 / M 2.5–9. I have modified Adler and Tuffin's translation, which expands a bit on the implications of the last phrase: "… the first-created twenty-four-hour day itself, which in fact is by nature the beginning of the chronological process."

The work then asserted that holding to the idea that as soon as there was matter to move and be moved there was time was not just a correct opinion, but was irrefutable:

> This no one of sound mind will oppose.[7]

Such a pejorative assertion meant all chronographers who disagreed with George's assertion of the First-Created Day were not among "those who think well" (τῶν εὖ φρονούντων).

George based his dismissive remark on the standard definition of time in Aristotle's *Physics*. Aristotle stated that while time is not equal to motion, time is the measure of motion.[8] Despite the demonstrated prevalence of the study of Aristotle in Byzantine elite circles, until the *Chronographia*, Aristotle's physics had not been joined to the practice of reckoning historical time. George began the *Chronographia* by correcting this oversight.[9] Readers who knew their Aristotle would acknowledge that, logically, the beginning of matter was the beginning of motion and was therefore, by definition, the beginning of time. The text drove the point home by bringing centuries of chronography to a *reductio ad absurdam.* Anyone who reckoned the beginning of time from the Creation of the moon on the fourth day was implicitly asserting that scripture asserted two beginnings: one "of the heaven and earth earlier in time," and

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7 οὐδεὶς ἀντιφράσοι τῶν εὖ φρονούντων. AT 2 / M 2.

8 "Every change and every motion is in time." πᾶσα μεταβολὴ καὶ πᾶσα κίνησις ἐν χρόνῳ ἐστίν. *Physics* 4.14. Ed. W. D. Ross, *Aristotelis physica*, 1st ed. corr. (1950; repr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 223a.14–15. Trans. Glen Coughlin, *Aristotle: Physics, or Natural Hearing* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2005), 92.

9 Beginning a systematic synthesis with Aristotle not only underscored its authority but set the *Chronographia* in conversation with another contemporary masterwork. The eighth-century philosopher-theologian John of Damascus' re-systematization of knowledge of the divine— *The Fountain of Knowledge*—was one of the most important works of the era and had also begun by defining the Aristotelian foundations of his investigation. For focused studies on the importance of Aristotelian thought and texts during this period see: Mossman Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974): 61–76; Mossman Roueché, "A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980): 71–98; Ken Parry, "Aristotle and the Icon: The Use of the *Categories* by Byzantine Iconophile Writers," in *Aristotle's Categories in the Byzantine, Arabic and Latin traditions*, ed. Sten Ebbesen, John Marenbon, and Paul Thom, Scientia Danica, Series H, Humanistica 8, 5 (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2013), 35–58; Thalia Anagnostopoulos, "Aristotle and Byzantine Iconoclasm," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 53 (2013): 763–90; and Christophe Erismann, "The Depicted Man: The Byzantine Afterlife of Aristotle's Logical Doctrine of Homonyms," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 59, no. 2 (2019): 311–39.

then, a second, "later, during which the First-Created Day began its existence." Such an idea was an affront to the first verse of the Septuagint with which the *Chronographia* began: "opposed to divinely inspired-utterances [i.e., the scriptures] *and* to the natural order of things," which one might render more literally "to the *physical* sequence of things."[10] The argument for the First-Created Day began by appealing to the authority of the Septuagint and of Aristotle and harmonizing their apparent contradiction. The only possible premise for a chronographer of sound mind, then, was to see that the holy First-Created Day "is incontrovertibly proved to be a chronological beginning, during which the heaven and the earth came into being."[11]

1.2   *The First-Created Day as a Statement of Roman Universality*

Beyond starting the literal first chronological day of creation from a different point than previous chronographers, the First-Created Day thesis expanded on the date which had been traditionally given to the Creation and the Incarnation. The fifth-century Alexandrian Annianos had claimed that both the Creation and the Incarnation had occurred on 25 March, the latter exactly 5500 years to the day after the former.[12] George the Synkellos was in complete agreement with this claim though as we have just seen his argument implied a correction to Annianos regarding which day in the creation sequence should be dated 25 March (the First Day or the Fourth Day).[13] The First-Created Day

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10   τῇ φυσικῇ τῶν πραγμάτων ἀκολουθίᾳ. AT 3 / M 2.15.

11   ἀναγκαίως οὖν ἐκ πάντων δείκνυται χρονικὴ ἀρχή, καθ' ἣν ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ γεγόνασιν. AT 3 / M 2.21–23.

12   On the development of the importance of 25 March, see Venance Grumel, *Traité d'études Byzantines*, vol. 1, *La Chronologie*, Bibliothèque Byzantine (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1958), 27–30. George the Synkellos closely adheres to Annianos' calculations, and likely simply copied statements from his works and the now-lost works of Panodoros (AT 46–8, 474 / M 35–36, 396). These chronicles were, unlike the *Chronography*, interspersed with calculations and Paschal Tables. George claims consulting both Maximus the Confessor on the computation of Easter (AT 455 / M 382), and an "Ecclesiastical Computation" related to the "Astronomical Tables" (AT 301–304 / M 245–47). This latter may have been "Annianos' attempt to bring Panodoros' Astronomical Canon into conformity with biblical chronology and the traditional dating of Christ's Incarnation" (AT lxiv–lxix; see AT 455 / M 381–82 and AT 46–47 / M 35–36).

13   At AT 46–47 / M 35, the *Chronographia* expressed complete agreement with the calculations of Annianos, reproving him only for attempting to *also* synchronize the records of Babylonian and Egyptian kings with a pre-Flood chronology derived straight from the Septuagint. See: Grumel, *Chronologie*, 95. Annianos had, in turn, positioned himself as heir to Julius Africanus, the third-century godfather of Christian chronography. On Annianos and his relationship to his scholarly predecessors, see Grumel, *Chronologie*, 92–94.

thesis expanded on Annianos' date for the Creation in two additional ways. First, the *Chronographia* asserted that there were four historical instances of the First-Created Day: the Creation, Noah's exit from the Ark after the Flood, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection. Second, the *Chronographia* used three calendars of the Mediterranean World to define the date of the First-Created Day: the Roman 25 March, the Egyptian 29 Phamenoth, and the Hebrew 1 Nisan.[14]

The claim that there were four theologically significant historical instances of 25 March was an expansion on Annianos' work. Annianos had already emphasized that three formative instances of divine intervention into the cosmos had all occurred on 25 March: the Creation, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection. The *Chronographia* added a fourth historical instance of divine intervention on the 25 March: when Noah exited the Ark in AM 2243.[15] Each of these instances of 25 March George labeled a "First-Created Day." For George the Synkellos these four instances of 25 March were thus four instances of the First-Created Day: 1) the Creation in AM 1; 2) the post-Flood drying of the earth in AM 2243; 3) the Incarnation of Christ in AM 5500; and, 4) the Resurrection of Christ in AM 5534. The meaning and significance of having these four days be given this same label will be addressed later. But first, we must clarify George's second innovation: to use three distinct calendars to define the date of these four days.

The repetition of the "date" of the First-Created Day according to three different calendars (as above), might be assumed to mean that these dates had been proven by extensive discussions of chronological calculations. However, we find no such proofs in the *Chronographia*.[16] Instead, unlike the logical argumentation that backed the claim that the beginning of time must be the first and not the fourth day of the creation sequence, George's claims about the dates of his four instances of the First-Created Day were assertions with cultural and political, rather than chronological, significance.[17]

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14   This dating formula occurs repeatedly throughout the text. For instance, at AT 1 / M 1: ἡ ἁγία πρωτόκτιστος ἡμέρα τοῦ πρώτου μηνὸς Νισὰν λεγομένου παρ' Ἑβραίοις καὶ ταῖς θεοπνεύ-στοις γραφαῖς, εἰκάδι πέμπτῃ τοῦ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις Μαρτίου μηνὸς οὖσα, τοῦ δὲ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις ἑβδόμου μηνὸς κθ'.

15   Creation: AT 4 / M 3; Ark on dry earth: AT 32 / M 23–24; Incarnation: AT 449–50, 454–55 / M 376–77, 380–82; Resurrection: AT 462–63, 465 / M 388–89, 390 and AT 472–73 / M 394–95.

16   The *Chronographia* also claimed without proof that recurrences of the First-Created Day were not only 25 March, 29 Phamenoth, and 1 Nisan, but *also* that they were the first day of the week (Sunday). See Grumel, *Chronologie*, 93n1.

17   A Greek universal chronicle which did make such calculations was the anonymous seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale*. Analysis and bibliography in Mary Whitby, "The

The Roman and Egyptian calendars which George referenced were solar calendars which had already been synchronized. However, the claim to date the First-Created Day according to the "Hebrew month of Nisan" would seem to mean George had synchronized the Hebrew lunar months to the Roman (and Egyptian) solar calendars. This is not the case, however. When George the Synkellos stated the date of the First-Created Day as being a day in the month of Nisan, he was also referring to a relatively new solar calendar rather than the traditional Hebrew lunar calendar.

That is, the assertion of the identity of 25 March with 1 Nisan was referring to the superimposition of a Greek-speaking Syrian community's solar calendar—which used the Hebrew month names—*over* the traditional Hebrew lunar calendar. By incorporating this Syrian Christian calendar into his new definitive chronology of world and empire, George made the Hebrew calendar subservient to that of the Christian Romans.[18]

Biblical Past in John Malalas and the Paschal Chronicle," in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron*, ed. Hagit Amirav and Bas ter Haar Romeny, Late Antique History and Religion 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 279–302. Text and translation in Ludwig August Dindorf, ed., *Chronicon Paschale, Chronicon Paschale*, 2 vols., CSHB (Bonn: Weber, 1832); Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, trans., *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, TTH 7 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989). Historians have generally concluded that George the Synkellos had not read the text. The *Chronicon Paschale* only survives in one tenth-century manuscript and George the Synkellos does not seem to have utilized it for his own composition (BAV, *Vat. gr.* 1941). Passages similar to those in George the Synkellos or Theophanes seem to have come from a common source, rather than from George's reading the *Chronicon Paschale* directly. See Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, xiv.

18   The key historical date for the calculation of the Jewish monthly calendar is Passover. The key historical date for the calculation of the Christian monthly calendar is the Resurrection. By asserting a fixed solar date for Christ's historic Resurrection, George was rewriting the Jewish historical calendar. Though it usually did so, the Jewish lunar calendar at the time of Christ was not intercalated to ensure that Passover (14 Nisan) fell after the vernal equinox (21 March). Theoretically 1 Nisan of AM 5534 (George's year for Christ's Resurrection) *could* have also been 25 March. However, the *historic* Resurrection could not possibly have occurred on 1 Nisan. As recounted by all four canonical gospels, Christ's historical *passio* occurred during the celebration of Passover, his Resurrection just after. Passover might in theory fall on a range of solar calendar dates, but in the Jewish calendar Passover was always 14 Nisan. The key passage is Exodus 12:18: "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening." Nisan was kept generally in the springtime by the occasional addition of a thirteenth lunar month (Adar II) but ranged across the Roman solar months March, April, and May. It was not until the tenth century that Jewish lunar reckoning was universally "fixed" to the solar calendar so that the first full moon after the vernal equinox always belonged to Nisan. On the repeating 19-year cycle of the lunar calendar, see Grumel, *Chronologie*, 31–56, in particular 41–48. (S. Stern has

George understood the Hebrew lunar calendar, but was devoted to the task of writing over it.[19] We know that George *did* understand the lunar calendar because in his description of the day Noah exited the Ark (the second instance of the First-Created Day), we find the *Chronographia* convincingly deducing "lunar days" (κατὰ σελήνην) from the narrative of the Book of Genesis, concluding that in AM 2243 the waters subsided on the moon's twelfth day, or "Luna 12."[20] Nevertheless, George dated this First-Created Day not as the twelfth in a lunar month but as 1 Nisan in his "Hebrew" solar calendar.[21]

The *Chronographia* introduced its Constantinopolitan audience to this new "Hebrew" solar calendar near its beginning.

> Let anyone who reads this [chronography] reckon the first of the first Hebrew month of Nisan as the beginning of every year in this chronicle, and not the first of the Egyptian month Thoth, or the first of the Roman month of January, or some other beginning-point used by some other nation.[22]

The *Chronographia* then defined a full 365-day solar calendar, matching Hebrew month names with the Roman and Egyptian solar calendars. "Nisan," for instance, became a 30-day month, from "[the Roman] 25 March up to

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shown convincingly that the "fixed" Jewish lunisolar calendar became accepted only very gradually over the course of the fourth to ninth centuries, and not universally until the tenth. Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, Second Century BCE–Tenth Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155–81, 197–200).

19 In case it needs to be made clear: George did clearly understand the difference between the solar and lunar calendars, correctly defining the date of Passover as "the fourteenth of the first month at evening" (AT 207 / M 168). As this passage continues, George gives even more specific information, stating that based on a tradition dating back to the year of the Resurrection: "even to this day one can see in Jericho at the vernal equinox new grain being harvested early in the warmer locations. From this grain, the most holy church in Jerusalem customarily offers the bloodless offering [the Eucharist] during the anniversary of the life-bringing Resurrection of Christ our God."

20 The Septuagint version of Genesis relates that Noah entered the Ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, Iyar (the Hebrew text states the seventeenth). Nearly a year later, on 1 Nisan, the flood waters finally dried up, and exactly one year after embarkation, the Ark was emptied on 27 Iyar (Genesis 8: 13–19).

21 1 Nisan in a Hebrew lunar calendar is, by definition, Luna 1. As the Venerable Bede succinctly explained to his students: "Whenever Holy Scripture ... indicates a day of the month on which something was said or done, it signifies nothing other than the age of the Moon." *De Temporum Ratione* 11.313, trans. Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, TTH 29 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 42.

22 AT 8 / M 6.

23 April, and from [the Egyptian] 29 Phamenoth up to 28 Pharmouthi."[23]
The three different calendars by which the *Chronographia* asserted the date
of the First-Created Day were in fact three parallel solar calendars.[24] This is
why George could define this day in "the first-created Hebrew month of Nisan"
as "*forever one and the same day* as 25 March."[25] George was so insistent on
promoting this new calendar that he included an explanation of it not only
in the first part of the *Chronographia*, but at the beginning of the *Chronicle*
as well.[26] George's use of this relatively new calendar should be understood
in the context of the "Romanization" of cultures in Mesopotamia, Syria, and
Palestine, which created "Romanizing" calendars to synchronize dates with the
imperial *status quo*.[27]

The appearance of innovative tripartite dating in the date given to the
First-Created Day was thus simply a statement about the alignment of three
major solar calendars. As such it was not a claim to chronological synchro-
nization so much as it was a statement of cultural synchronization in line
with Byzantine ideals of imperial universality.[28] George's claim was not

23   AT 9–10 / M 6–7.

24   To my knowledge only one other scholar of the *Chronographia* has noted the importance
     of George's "Hebrew" calendar: Jürgen Tubach, "Synkellos' Kalendar der Habräer," *Vigilae
     Christianae* 47 (1993): 379–89. See the table of the three calendars at p. 381.

25   "And after [the Christ's] burial by Joseph of Arimathia and Nikodemos, he arose from the
     dead at dawn of the third day after this day of preparation, on the first day of the week, on
     the first day of the first Hebrew month of Nisan, which *is forever one and the same day* as
     25 March" (AT 473 / M 395; emphasis mine).

26   Specifically, repeating the definition of Nisan as the "Hebrew and Christian month of
     Nisan." καὶ ταφεὶς ἀνίσταται τῇ γ´ ἡμέρᾳ, Φαμενὼθ κθ´ ἤτοι Μαρτίου κε´, ἐπιφωσκούσης κυρια-
     κῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων, πρωὶ καλανδῶν Ἀπριλλίων, α´ τοῦ πρωτοκτίστου μηνὸς Νισὰν παρ᾽ Ἑβραίοις
     καὶ Χριστιανοῖς, περὶ ἧς εἴρηται· "ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν," καὶ πάλιν·
     "αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ᾗ ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός." AT 463 / M 389.12–17.

27   On the historic process of intercalating the Jewish calendar, see: Stern, *Calendar and
     Community*, 34–46. See discussion of the wider phenomenon of bringing diverse calen-
     dars into line with the imperial Roman system under analysis of these *hemerologia* by
     Alan E. Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology: Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity*
     (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1972), 172–78, 186–88. See also Stern, *Calendar and Community*, 211–
     75. J. Ben-Dov suggests discussing these surviving texts in the context of a regional culture
     of exchange and influence: Jonathan Ben-Dov, *Head of All Years: Astronomy and Calendars
     at Qumran in Their Ancient Context*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 78 (Leiden:
     Brill, 2008), 266–70.

28   In which empire and providence are both the "οἰκουμένη." If the point was purely chron-
     ological synchronizations, the *Chronographia* would have emphasized other histori-
     cal dates. The *Chronicon Paschale* is an example of a chronology that did this, drawing
     directly on computists' work to synchronize multiple calendars and so project the actual
     date of the Easter Feast forward and backwards in time. The *Chronicon Paschale* was
     built on the 532-year paschal table, which laid out dates for the Feast of the Resurrection

chronologically but politically and culturally significant. The date of the First-Created Day was an assertion of the synchronization of Annianos' Egyptian culture and George's own Greek-speaking Syrian culture within the Roman Christian empire's divinely sanctioned universality. The First-Created Day was an affirmation that the Greek-speaking Christian cultures of Egypt and Syria remained within the "economy" of Roman history despite being—since the expansion of Islam—outside of the empire. The date of the First-Created Day was a statement of an ecumenical supra-imperial Christian *romanitas* in the language of chronography.

2　Theological Truth in the Chronological Paradox of the First-Created Day

With the meaning and political implications of the First-Created Day thesis clear, it suddenly becomes apparent that George's innovative claim contained a chronological contradiction that logical and political motivations alone cannot explain. We have clarified that George claimed the First-Created Day had occurred four different times throughout history, and it could be dated according to three different calendars. At the same time, the *Chronographia* defined the First-Created Day in a way that seemed to render these specifications meaningless, discussing these dates as a single day. This paradox is embedded in the language of the *Chronography*'s opening:

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over 532 years by tracking the conjunctions of the 19-year lunar calendrical cycle and the 28-year solar cycle. It applied computists' reckonings by solar and lunar monthly cycles to chronographers' reckonings in a linear sequence of years, using calculations designed to identify dates for the Easter Feast to project days and dates into the past when the sources had not recorded such specificity. For instance, under AD 609: "And so from the death of Constantine until now there are 272 years, while from his twentieth anniversary, 284 complete years. Easter indeed fell on the third of April 272 years ago in year 13 of the moon's cycle, in the second year of Olympiad 279." Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, 147–48; Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, 698. The anonymous paschal chronicler also suggested typologies in correspondences between days of the week, such as Christ's baptism occurring on a Wednesday, the same day God created the waters. See Warren T. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 343 for other examples. Nevertheless, the paschal chronicler adhered to a strictly historical and linear time. The text never stated that days with the same date or day of the week were in any way the same day: even in the entry for AD 562, at the completion of the first 532-year cycle on a date that was demonstrably the same astronomical day as Christ's resurrection (see Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale*, 684; Whitby and Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, 134–35).

On this Day also the salutation and greeting of Gabriel prophesied the divine conception to the Holy Virgin;

On this Day also the only begotten Son of the Father—after fulfilling the inexpressible incarnation from her, the entire plan (οἰκονομίαν)— rose from the dead; [and so] the 5,534th year from the creation of the cosmos received its beginning *according to this same Holy Day* of the life-bearing Resurrection.[29]

This sort of statement also occurs in the latter part of the text, in the *Chronicle.* There again the First-Created Day of Creation in AM 1 is even more emphatically both the day of Christ's Incarnation in AM 5500, and also the day of Christ's Resurrection in AM 5534.

We have committed all our labour on this work to demonstrate the premise that this First-Created Day corresponds with (σύστοιχον) the day of the divine proclamation and the miraculous conception of the only-begotten son of God from the holy Virgin; and with the day of the life-bringing Resurrection from the dead, a day which for those made worthy to celebrate it in spirit and truth is both more divine than the other days and the source of all light.[30]

The entire goal of the *Chronographia* was to demonstrate that historical instances of the Holy First-Created Day "correspond." What did the text mean by this?[31]

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29   ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ Γαβριὴλ τὸν ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τὸ χαῖρε τῇ ἁγίᾳ παρθένῳ τῆς θείας συλλήψεως προε-φθέγξατο. ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς μετὰ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἄρρητον σάρκωσιν πᾶσαν πληρώσας οἰκονομίαν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη, ἀρχὴν λαβόντος κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἁγίαν τῆς ζωηφόρου ἀναστάσεως ἡμέραν τοῦ ͵εφλδʹ ἔτους ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου. AT 1 / M 1.16–20. Emphasis mine.

30   Περὶ ταύτης καὶ ἡμῖν ὁ πᾶς τοῦδε τοῦ γράμματος πόνος καταβέβληται, δεῖξαι τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μίαν πρωτόκτιστον ἡμέραν σύστοιχον τῇ τοῦ θείου εὐαγγελισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ὑπερφυοῦς ἐξ ἁγίας παρθέ-νου συλλήψεως τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ τῇ τῆς ζωοποιοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως θεοειδεστέρᾳ καὶ ὁλοφώτῳ τοῖς ἀξίοις ἑορτάζειν αὐτὴν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. AT 463–64 / M 389.20–25.

31   A term the *Chronographia* uses to express the relationship between instances is "prefigure" or "prototype" such as: "the holy day prototypifies the Resurrection" (ὡς προτυπούσης τὴν ἁγίαν ἀναστάσιμον ἡμέραν). AT 2 / M 2.2. Since the day of the Creation and the day of the Resurrection were the same day, then March 25 in AM 5534 was both the date of the Resurrection, and the date from which the Resurrection was tallied. In the *Chronographia*, the Resurrection was both the premise and the conclusion; the same could be said for Creation and Incarnation.

We have seen that at one level it meant that all four days occurred on the date called March twenty-fifth in the Roman calendar, the twenty-ninth of Phamenoth in the Egyptian, and the first of Nisan in a Syrian "Hebrew" solar calendar. But on the other hand, there are instances where it means these dates are literally one day.

> And after his burial, [Christ] arose on the third day, on 29 Phamenoth, that is 25 March, when the Lord's day, the first day of the week, was dawning, on the eighth day before the Kalends of April, the first day of the first-created Hebrew and Christian month of Nisan, concerning which it was said: 'In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth' (Gen. 1.1.), and again, 'This is the book of the creation of the heaven and the earth, on which day God created.' (Gen. 2.4)[32]

In the above sentence, the text does not restate the subject noun "day" (ἡ ἡμέρα), but conjoins its statement about the First-Created Day in AM 5534 and the First-Created Day in AM 1 with the relative clause "concerning which" (περὶ ἧς). That is, the grammatical tense does not restart when the subject transitions from the day of the Resurrection to the day of the Creation. Grammatically, this thrice-dated date is defined as a single time-defying day.

2.1   *The First-Created Day as the Mystery of the Incarnation*

The assertion that multiple historical instances of the First-Created Day were the same was an unprecedented idea in chronography. However, precedents for the idea exist in other genres.

We have already seen that the *Chronographia* began by re-iterating the Septuagint's first sentence, and then immediately commenting upon this sentence.[33] This method was standard in the rhetorics of homiletics, or preaching. And indeed, we can find conceptual parallels to a single First-Created Day in standard sermons of the Greek Christian tradition.[34] The fourth-century philosopher-theologian bishop Basil of Caesarea wrote a series

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32   καὶ ταφεὶς ἀνίσταται τῇ γ΄ ἡμέρᾳ, Φαμενὼθ κθ΄ ἤτοι Μαρτίου κε΄, ἐπιφωσκούσης κυριακῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων, πρωὶ καλανδῶν Ἀπριλλίων, α΄ τοῦ πρωτοκτίστου μηνὸς Νισὰν παρ' Ἑβραίοις καὶ Χριστιανοῖς, περὶ ἧς εἴρηται· "ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν," καὶ πάλιν· "αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ᾗ ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός." AT 463 / M 389.

33   "In the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ) God created the heaven and the earth." Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. AT 1 / M 1.

34   George the Synkellos had demonstrable access to the works of Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), mentioning that a manuscript attributed to that author solved "the question of chronological agreement between the two kingdoms of the Hebrews (Israel and Judah)." AT 295 /M 240.

of homilies on the Creation known as the *Hexaemeron*.[35] Basil asserted the
same premise we saw in the *Chronographia*: time began from the moment God
created matter. Furthermore, in order to explain that scripture meant that the
"one day" of creation was *both* eternal and temporal, Basil also articulated an
idea strikingly similar to the First-Created Day:

> In order that you might carry the idea on to the future life, [Scripture]
> specifies [this] icon of eternity as "one," the very beginning (ἀπαρχή) of
> days, equal-in-age to light, the Holy Lord's Day, which has been honored
> by the Resurrection of the Lord.[36]

Basil explained that a period in which time could not be defined by the proces-
sion of the earth, moon, and sun—could not, that is, because they had not yet
been created—had yet been described in scripture with the term which means
a twenty-four hour day "in order that, through the term, [the day] might be
related (τὸ συγγενές) to eternity."[37] Basil's concept is similar to the First-Created
Day in linking Creation and Resurrection, but it still maintained the line
between theological typology and historical chronology.

   A second homiletic example gives us a paradigm for an author breaking the
rules of chronological sequence in favor of conveying theological truth. The
anonymous author of this homily *In resurrectionem domini* (CPG 4740) is per-
haps nearly contemporary to George the Synkellos and as such this work can
serve as evidence of the circulation of ideas similar to the First-Created Day
thesis in his era. The homily in question has been incorrectly transmitted under

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35   In *Homily 2*, Basil discusses the phrase "the earth was invisible and unfinished" (ἀόρατος
      ἦν ἡ γῆ καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος) and demonstrates that God was not merely a craftsman who
      arranged pre-existing matter, but that He created all matter from this first moment, which
      included the beginning of time. Stanislas Giet, ed. and trans., *Basile de Césarée: Homélies
      sur l'hexaéméron*, 2nd ed., SC 26 bis (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1968), 138–87. My translation.
36   Ἵνα οὖν πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν ζωὴν τὴν ἔννοιαν ἀπαγάγῃ, μίαν ὠνόμασε τοῦ αἰῶνος τὴν εἰκόνα,
      τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τῶν ἡμερῶν, τὴν ὁμήλικα τοῦ φωτός, τὴν ἁγίαν κυριακήν, τὴν τῇ ἀναστάσει
      τοῦ Κυρίου τετιμημένην. *Homily 2 on the Hexaemeron* sec. 8, 52B. Ed. Giet, *Homélies sur
      l'hexaéméron*, 184.6–9. My translation. The text should be read as playing with multiple
      senses of ἀπαρχή, from the literal *very beginning* (as I translated it) to the metaphorical
      idea of *first offerings* to a divinity. The latter sense is less common in the classical corpus
      but the primary idea of the word in the Septuagint (see: Numbers 15.19–21). The New
      Testament extrapolates metaphorically from this usage (see Romans 11.16) or uses the
      term to describe, for instance, early converts to the way of Christ (see James 1.18). In the
      New Testament corpus "first-fruits" has become the standard English translation.
37   *Homily 2* sec. 8, 49C. Ed. Giet, *Homélies sur l'hexaéméron*, 182.3–4. This issue was raised by
      asking why scripture used the phrase "One day" (ἡμέρα μία) as opposed to the "First day"
      (πρώτη ἡμέρα). *Homily 2* sec. 8, 49A. Ed. Giet, 178.19.

the name of the famous John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople at the turn of the fifth century.[38] As S. Voicu has shown, CPG 4740 in fact depends on a homily by the sixth-century presbyter Leontios of Constantinople.[39] The attribution of CPG 4740 to John Chrysostom is not essential to my point but is potentially revealing of a ninth-century trend as there are, in my view, some loose rhetorical connections between CPG 4740 and the most well-known paschal homily attributed to Chrysostom, the *Catechetical Homily on Pascha* (CPG 4605), in which there was demonstrable interest during George the Synkellos' milieu.[40]

For the purposes of understanding the rhetoric with which George the Synkellos introduces his concept of the First-Created Day, the anonymous homilist of CPG 4740 offers a productive comparison as they also use ambiguous syntax to poetically depict the concept of a recurring "same holy day." As an example of liturgical commentary this homily works with the idea of participating in a holy day from multiple nodes on a strict timeline. Specifically,

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38   The pseudo-Chrysostom homily *In resurrectionem domini* has been edited by Michel Aubineau, *Homélies Pascales* (*cinq homélies inédites*), SC 187 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 305–37. Discussion in Sever J. Voicu, "La tradizione manoscritta dell'omelia pseudocrisostomica *In resurrectionem Domini* (CPG 4740)," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 18 (1988), 219–28. The author is believed to be of the eighth or ninth century, though the earliest surviving manuscript is of the tenth century. I am incredibly grateful to Katherin Papadopoulos and Sever J. Voicu for bringing this riddle of attributions and transmission to my attention.

39   Voicu, "La tradizione," 219n1. The Leontios homily in question has been translated and discussed in Pauline Allen and Cornelis Datema, "Homily VIII. On the Feast of Holy Easter (*CPG 7891*)," in *Leontius: Presbyter of Constantinople*, BYZAUS 9 (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine studies, 1991), 95–116.

40   Text in PG 59, 721–724. On the comparable rhetoric of CPG 4605 see: Panayiotis Papageorgiou, "The Paschal Catechetical Homily of St. John Chrysostom: A Rhetorical and Contextual Study," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43, no. 1–4 (1998) 93–104. A recent dissertation has proposed that the earliest extant attribution of CPG 4605 to John Chrysostom was in the early ninth century and by Theodore of Stoudios at the monastery of St. John in Stoudios: Mark Huggins, "Reception of John Chrysostom in the Middle Byzantine Period (9th–13th centuries): A Study of the Catechetical Homily on Pascha (CPG 4605)," abstract (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2021), https://hdl.handle.net/1842/38102. John Chrysostom was one of the best-known homilists and commentators throughout the Byzantine period as, for example, George the Synkellos himself cites Chrysostom's commentary on Matthew as part of his discussion of the Creation, AT 5 / M 3.19–22. Chrysostom's sermons in general and his homilies on the feast of the Resurrection in particular would have been familiar to Constantinopolitan churchmen of the ninth century as indicated by surviving manuscripts from the ninth and tenth centuries. See, for instance, from the ninth century: Moscow, Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Musej (GIM) *Sinod. Gr. 284* (*Vlad. 215*); Escorial, Real Biblioteca *X IV.6* (*Andrés 401*); and, from the tenth century: Athens, Mouseio Benaki, *T A 319* (*110*); Jerusalem, Patriarchikē bibliothēkē, *Panagiou Taphou 6*; Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Barocci 174* and *Barocci 199*.

the present yearly feast celebrating Christ's Resurrection partook of the same
moment as the past event which it commemorated:

> This is the very day (Αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα)
> on which Adam was freed,
> on which Eve was released from grief,
> on which brutal death shuddered,
> on which the power that burst from the mighty stones was let loose,
> and the barriers of the tombs which were torn asunder were undone, ...
> on which grew the abundance and fruitfulness of the resurrection,
> as in the garden inhabited by the race of men,
> on which the lilies of the newly-illumined were made to spring up ...
> on which the multitude of the Jews was put to shame,
> on which the ranks of the faithful are made glad,
> on which the wreaths of the martyrs are made afresh.
> "*This, then, is the day that the Lord has made,*
> *let us rejoice and be glad in it.*"[41]

In a strictly chronological sense, most of the events listed did not and could
not occur on the actual date of the Resurrection. And yet despite the fact that
at the mention of "the faithful" the verbs shift from past tense into present,
the syntactical cadence (*are* made glad; *are* made afresh) persists unbroken.[42]
The very grammar of the rhetorical flourishes of CPG 4740 conveyed the asser-
tion that in the liturgical life of the church—at the yearly celebration of the
Resurrection—past events could and did exist in a unified present.

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41   Αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ᾗ ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἠλευθερώθη , ἐν ᾗ ἡ Εὕα ἀπηλλάγη τῆς λύπης, ἐν ᾗ ὁ ἀνήμερος
      θάνατος ἔφριξεν, ἐν ᾗ τῶν κραταιῶν λίθων ἡ δύναμις παρελύθη ῥαγεῖσα καὶ τὰ τῶν μνημείων
      κλεῖθρα διασπασθέντα ἀνέθη ... ἐν ᾗ τὸ τῆς ἀναστάσεως εὐθαλὲς καὶ εὔκαρπον ὡς ἐν κήπῳ τῇ
      οἰκουμένῃ τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐβλάστησεν, ἐν ᾗ τὰ τῶν νεοφωτίστων ἀνεφύησαν κρίνα ...
      ἐν ᾗ τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων κατῃσχύνθησαν πλήθη, ἐν ᾗ τὰ τῶν πιστῶν εὐφραίνονται τάγματα, ἐν ᾗ
      τὰ τῶν μαρτύρων ἀναθάλλουσι διαδήματα. "Ταύτην τοίνυν τὴν ἡμέραν ἐποίησεν ὁ κύριος, ἀγαλ-
      λιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ." Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In resurrectionem domini* 3. Ed.
      Aubineau, *Homélies Pascales*, 322, 324. Translation mine. The *Chronographia* concludes
      a passage with the same citation: "Concerning which [day] it was said: 'In the beginning
      God created the heaven and the earth, on which day God created.' Concerning this, David
      the ancestor of God, as a prelude to universal salvation, has sung: 'This is the day that the
      Lord created; let us rejoice and be glad in it.'" AT 463 / M 389.

42   The text seems to use these temporal contradictions—introduced by *this is the very day*—
      to enjoin the "ranks of the faithful" listening *in the present* to consider these past acts as
      part of present reality. These were *future pasts* called into being by the act of Resurrection.
      I am grateful to Alexandre M. Roberts for first bringing this shift to my attention.

It is not likely that the passage above was George the Synkellos' exact model for putting grammar and chronology at the service of theology and philosophy, and it is not my goal to find his model. Rather, I wish to show here that the rhetorics of the First-Created Day thesis echoed ideas that were present in the language of contemporaneous homiletics and liturgical commentary. For instance, there is a cadence strikingly similar to that which we just saw in CPG 4740 in a passage from the *Chronographia*'s prefatory discourse. There the phrase "this day" is used to make a chronological connection between the day on which time was created, the day Christ's life began, and the day Christ rose from the dead:

> On this day also (ἐν ταύτῃ [ἡμέρᾳ] καὶ)
>   Gabriel foretold the divine conception ...
> on this day also (ἐν ταύτῃ [ἡμέρᾳ] καὶ)
>   the only begotten Son arose from the dead ...
> on this same holy day (κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἁγίαν ... ἡμέραν)
>   of the life-bringing Resurrection,
> the 5534th year from the creation of the universe commenced.[43]

This passage capitalizes on the ambiguity of the Greek word ἡμέρα as both "date" and "present day" in order to make the assertion that when these dates align this is, somehow, a recurring now, "this same holy day." As in CPG 4740, George's own poetic syntax smooths the conceptual paradox.

We have already seen George's likely Hellenized Syrian-Palestinian origins potentially motivating his use of a "Hebrew" solar calendar to date the First-Created Day. In the same fashion the homiletic *Nativity Hymns* of St. Ephrem the Syrian provide the most complete model for using chronological paradoxes to explain the theological truth of the Incarnation. Like George's multiple instances of the First-Created Day, Ephrem applied his idea to not only the Nativity proper—Christmas—but both the Incarnation which occurred nine months earlier, and also the Resurrection which would fulfill the Incarnation's purpose. In his fourth *Nativity Hymn*, Ephrem made meaning of

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43   AT 1 / M 1. I have arranged the text to highlight the repeated phrases. The full passage reads: ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ Γαβριὴλ τὸν ἀσπασμὸν καὶ τὸ χαῖρε τῇ ἁγίᾳ παρθένῳ τῆς θείας συλλήψεως προεφθέγξατο. ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς τοῦ πατρὸς μετὰ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἄρρητον σάρκωσιν πᾶσαν πληρώσας οἰκονομίαν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη, ἀρχὴν λαβόντος κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἁγίαν τῆς ζωηφόρου ἀναστάσεως ἡμέραν τοῦ ͵εφλδ' ἔτους ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου.

the Incarnation's temporal paradox by turning not to the exegesis of scripture, but to the experience of liturgical worship.[44]

In Ephrem's hymn, paradox is given coherence through comparisons and contrasts between the natural mysteries of the seasons, the mysteries of theological truths, and liturgical practices. Ephrem characterized the nativity as an event, as a day, as a yearly festival, and as a constantly repeated liturgical practice, weaving between all of these throughout the work. The text first confronts the paradox of an incarnate eternal being by embedding it within an excursus on the mystery of the horticultural cycle: both a cluster of grapes maturing for communion wine and the feast day of the Resurrection event are to be identified with *this day*.[45]

Ephrem pushes the connection even further, moving from what the day *did* to what the day *means* by focusing on the idea that "the day is like you," i.e., Christ.[46] In a variety of different ways, the hymn offers explanation for the mystery of the Incarnation by setting the paradoxes of the recurring feasts of Incarnation and the Resurrection side by side (stanzas 143–92) with the mystery

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44   As F. Cassingena-Trévedy notes, *Nativity Hymn 4* is the most quantitatively imposing of Ephrem's *madraše* (ܡܕܪ̈ܫܐ) hymns. This genre of hymn was intended to be sung rather than read as an exposition or doctrinal hymn with the "connotation of *disputatio* in connexion with *investigatio*." François Cassingena-Trévedy, trans., *Éphrem de Nisibe: Hymnes sur la nativité*, Sources Chrétiennes 559 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2001), 11; Jessie Payne Smith, *A Compendius Syriac Dictionary: Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, D. D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 254B; and Tryggve Kronholm, *Motifs from Genesis I–II in the Genuine Hymns of Ephrem the Syrian with Particular Reference to the Influence of Jewish Exegetical Tradition*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series 11 (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1978), 16 with notes 6, 7, 8, and 9 on the four different genres into which Ephrem's works are divided.

45   The excursus does not so much clarify the actions of Christ, as defend the initial assertion that Christ's actual Incarnation in the womb of the Virgin and his harrowing of death through the Resurrection from the dead are both "hidden" on "this day" in, through, or even *as* the natural springtime mysteries of the month of Nisan. See Stanzas 27–34. "The early-maturing [grape] cluster is this day | in which the cup of salvation was hidden. | The first-born feastday is this day | that is the first to conquer all the feastdays. | … In *kānūn* [December/January] when the seed hides in the earth, | the Staff of life sprang up from the womb. | In *nīsān* [March/April] when the seed springs up into the air, | the Sheaf propagated itself in the earth. | In Sheol Death mowed it down and consumed it, | But the Medicine of Life hidden in it burst through. | For in *nīsān* when the lambs bleat in the field, | into the womb He, the Pascha Lamb, entered." For the Syriac see: Edmund Beck, ed., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen De Nativitate* (*Epiphania*), CSCO 186, Syr 82 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1959), 28. Translation includes my slight modification to McVey's rendering of the Syriac original in Kathleen E. McVey, trans., *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 91–92.

46   In Ephrem's text the idea is that as Christ brought life and peace, the day of the Resurrection reconciles heaven with earth, holiness with sinners.

of a never-ending loaf of bread, and the eternally recurring buds of Spring.[47] The mysteries of Calendar, of Eucharist, and of Creation are comprehensible insofar as they are similar to the mystery of how dead seeds contain the life of the fruit to come. For Ephrem, the life of Christ is an eternal day that "branches out and becomes many" like a grape vine. In other words, Ephrem brings his audience into acceptance of the mystery of the Incarnation by showing them parallels they have encountered and experienced in the natural (chronological) and liturgical (eschatological) worlds.[48] Even as *that* day temporally or historically occurs, even as it is celebrated liturgically in the months of *kānūn* and *nīsān*, Ephrem's "day" is eternal by its partaking of the daily eucharistic mystery—into which Ephrem collapses all the paradox and mystery of God's incarnation, the seasons, and humanity's divinization.

Pseudo-Chrysostom and Ephrem the Syrian are by no means the only homilists to work with the idea of "today" as a way to enfold the salvation history of the past with a believer's present.[49] Nevertheless, the specific concepts of Ephrem's just-elucidated ideas are highly resonant with George's First-Created Day in particular. Ephrem taught that the Incarnation could be known, but not understood in and of itself. It must be understood in connection to the broader mystery of all of Christ's deeds, in connection to the wonders of creation and

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47 The poem's second section contrasts the day of Christ's birth with the day of Herod's birth by personifying each day with the man born on it. "The day of the transitory one passed away as he did, | but Your day, like You, will remain forever." *Nativity Hymn 4*, stanza 71. Trans. McVey, *Ephrem*, 95. The contrast between Herod's limited day and Christ's limitless day is continued into a series of paradoxes considering how eternity and divinity can be contained in temporal and mortal elements and entities. Contrasts between an earthly (finite, twenty-four hour) day and the (repeatedly, perpetually occurring) feast of the Incarnation find their final association in a contemplation on the miracle of the Eucharist: the paradox of joining the elements of bread and wine with the eternal body and blood of the Christ. This is the logic that takes the reader from stanza 11: "Your day resembles you for although it is one, | it branches out and becomes many in order to be like You," to stanza 95: "The one loaf of bread He broke cannot be confined, | And the one cup that he mingled cannot be limited." Trans. McVey, *Ephrem*, 90, 97.

48 The hymn culminates its progression of conjoined incompatibilities with a parallel that makes these distinct mysteries into the same mystery of instantiated limitlessness: "While indeed He was on the cross, He received the dead; | just so, while he was a babe, He was forming babes. | While He was dead, He was opening graves; | while He was in the womb, He was opening wombs." *Nativity Hymn 4*, stanzas 170–71. Trans. McVey, *Ephrem*, 101.

49 On parallel uses of the concept in the hymnography and homiletics of Gregory of Nazianzos, Romanos the Melodist, and Leontios the Presbyter see: Derek Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 76, 82, 97, 100.

nature, and also in connection to holy worship. It is with this latter connection that we can use Ephrem to take our next step in understanding the idea of the First-Created Day. To make sense of the idea's paradoxical unity and multiplicity readers were directed to the experiential knowledge that was accessible only to participants in the liturgical worship of the church of Constantinople.

2.2 *The First-Created Day as the Experience of Worship*

The final piece to the idea of the First-Created Day relies on the specifically participatory epistemology of the Byzantine *ekklesia*. D. Krueger's 2014 study *Liturgical Subjects* described the formation of a specific sort of self-conception through the penitential hymnography and offertory prayers of the Middle Byzantine period. And there is an element of what Krueger specifically identified in the early eighth-century *Great Kanon* of Andrew of Crete that resonates with the epistemology we have identified here. The congregation was to "understand the hymn and absorb its implications for the understanding of themselves."[50] But what we have seen in the *Chronographia* is different, for rather than a specific understanding of the truth of the self in the presence of the divine as the object of mercy, the self developed by George the Synkellos' conception of chronology was a self who could know the truth of the universe through liturgical participation.[51]

I have already shown how the *Chronographia* constructed its claim that knowledge of universal time was a prerogative shared by those who had access to divine grace within the fold of Christian worship. In one important passage of the *Chronicle*, for example, George explains that

> this First-Created Day corresponds with the day of the divine proclamation and the miraculous conception of the only-begotten son of God from the holy Virgin and with the day of the life-bringing Resurrection from the dead a day which for *those made worthy to celebrate it in spirit and truth* is both more divine than the other days and the source of all light.[52]

Ideas like this are repeated. We can see an even stronger connection between correct chronological understanding and a liturgical community in the explanation of the First-Created Day thesis in the *Chronography*, at the very

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50   Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects*, 139.
51   See especially, Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects*, 98–101 and 159–60.
52   Τὴν αὐτὴν καὶ μίαν πρωτόκτιστον ἡμέραν σύστοιχον τῇ τοῦ θείου εὐαγγελισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ὑπερφυοῦς ἐξ ἁγίας παρθένου συλλήψεως τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ τῇ τῆς ζωοποιοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάσεως θεοειδεστέρα καὶ ὁλοφώτῳ τοῖς ἀξίοις ἑορτάζειν αὐτὴν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. AT 463–64 / M 389.21–25. Emphasis mine.

beginning of the *Chronographia*. There, the text specifically claims that understanding of the meaning of this day is given to those who receive divine grace:

> It is abundantly clear for *those deemed worthy of divine grace* that the first Pascha [or, Easter] of the Lord also began on this holy first-created day.[53]

Only one "worthy of divine grace" could know or perceive that this alignment of dates occurred on the Holy First-Created Day. What is the meaning of a claim that knowledge of universal time was a prerogative shared by those who were within the fold of "those deemed worthy of divine grace"? Was accurate, true chronology only accessible to those granted access to grace?

A supra-chronological salvific time had been described as an experiential aspect of not only yearly but daily worship in a surviving text written much closer to George the Synkellos' own milieu: the *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation* (Ἱστορία Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ καὶ Μυστικὴ Θεωρία) attributed to Patriarch Germanos (r. 715–730).[54] Like John of Damascus, Germanos was an iconophile condemned by the iconoclast Council of 754. He had then been posthumously exonerated by the iconophile Council of 787. This council had been led by patriarch Tarasios of Constantinople, the very patriarch under whom George himself eventually served as *synkellos*.

Of all the texts we have surveyed, the liturgical commentary of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* offers the closest conceptual parallels to George the Synkellos' claim that a cosmos bound by linear temporality experienced the action of the timeless eternal God as a recurring First-Created Day. We also have good reason to think that George may have been able to expect his immediate audience to know Germanos' text themselves.[55] The *Historia Ecclesiastica* may well have

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53 Πρόδηλον δὲ ὅτι καὶ πρῶτον κυριακὸν πάσχα τοῖς καταξιωθεῖσι τῆς θείας χάριτος κατὰ ταύτην ἤρξατο τὴν ἁγίαν πρωτόκτιστον ἡμέραν. AT 2 / M 2. Emphasis mine.

54 Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 563–65; De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 407–9. Germanos (Patriarch of Constantinople from 715–730) fought against imperial religious policies: he opposed Philippikos' revival of monotheletism in 712, and then Leo III's ostensible iconoclastic policies in the 720s. Germanos was deposed by the emperor in 730.

55 Though this connection is intriguing, it cannot be assumed that George would be familiar with writings attributed to a patriarch from an earlier era simply because of their doctrinal agreements. Fortunately, there is a direct, material textual connection between George Synkellos' *Chronography* and the *Ecclesiastical History*: the texts share a ninth-century translator. Liturgical variants place the commentary no earlier than the eighth century, and not much later than the early ninth (thus, inclusive of George's time as the *synkellos*). Germanos is only the most likely candidate for authorship of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See René Bornert, *Les commentaires Byzantins de la divine liturgie: du VIIᵉ au XVᵉ siécle*,

cleared the way for the First-Created Day thesis by dissolving the line between human temporality and divine eternality in its description of the liturgical experience of the Church.[56]

The *Historia Ecclesiastica* asserted that in the act of performing the liturgy, the celebrants and the people became a part of the whole of salvation history, spanning the Old and New Testaments, as they assembled with the saints in the "kingdom of Christ."[57]

> The church is earthly heaven (ἐπίγειος οὐρανός), in which the heavenly (ἐπουράνιος) God dwells and walks about, typifying (ἀντιτυποῦσα) the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ.[58]

A priest serving in such a setting did not merely contemplate figures and symbols of Christ, but actually entered the heavenly kingdom and divine splendor.[59] In this world the invitation to the congregation to consume the

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AOC 9 (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1966), 132–60; and Robert F. Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–1981): 45–75, especially 47–58. Anastasius Bibliothecarius, an emissary for the Carolingian Louis II, visited Constantinople in 870 and there selected a number of works for translation into Latin. Besides translating excerpts from George's *Chronography* and Theophanes' *Chronicle*, Anastasius also made a translation of Germanos' *Ecclesiastical History* for the Carolingian Charles the Bald. See Anastasius' dedicatory letter, "Anastasii Bibliothecarii Epistolae Sive Praefationes" edited by Ernst Perels and Gerhard Laehr in *Epistolae Karolini aevi V*, ed. Societas aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi, MGH Epp 7 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), 434–35. A ninth-century manuscript of the translation survives as Codex 711 at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Cambrai. It is entirely plausible to suppose that Anastasius found the manuscripts of these texts in close physical proximity.

56 See P. Magdalino's discussion of the text as part of a dialogue that intertwined iconoclasm, eschatology, liturgy, and politics in Paul Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy and Propaganda," in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Roueché (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), 22–23.

57 Paul Meyendorff, *St Germanus of Constantinople on the Divine Liturgy*, Popular Patristics Series 8 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 100–101 (sec. 41).

58 Ἐκκλησία ἐστὶν ἐπίγειος οὐρανός, ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἐπουράνιος Θεὸς ἐνοικεῖ καὶ ἐμπεριπατεῖ, ἀντιτυποῦσα τὴν σταύρωσιν καὶ τὴν ταφὴν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν Χριστοῦ. Ed. and trans. Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 56 (sec. 1); translation slightly adapted.

59 "Then the priest, leading everyone into the heavenly Jerusalem, to His holy mountain exclaims: Behold, let us lift up our hearts! ... Then the priest goes with confidence to the throne of the grace of God and ... speaks to God. He converses ... with uncovered face seeing the glory of the Lord ... 'one-to-one' he addresses God ... contemplating the heavenly liturgy, [he] is initiated even into the splendor of the life-giving Trinity." Εἶτα πάντας ἀναβιβάζων ὁ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὴν ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ καὶ βοᾷ· Βλέπετε ἄνω σχῶμεν τὰς καρδίας· ... Εἶτα πρόσεισιν ὁ ἱερεὺς μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ ...

Eucharist was "so that it might be fulfilled that '*Today* I have begotten you.'"[60] This participation brought history together into the single moment of divine experience:

> the souls of Christians are called together to assemble with the prophets, apostles, and hierarchs in order to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the mystical banquet of the Kingdom of Christ.... We are no longer on earth but standing by the royal throne of God in heaven, where Christ is.[61]

The idea that a reality joining earth and heaven was revealed on the basis of faith resonates with the claim that on the First-Created Day "the new creation begun in Christ ushered from death to life *all those with a correct belief in Him*."[62]

D. Krueger has identified a long history of the "development of attitudes about how Christian liturgy might work" specifically the way the liturgy fashions a particular idea of self and community. Indeed, the First-Created Day thesis is deeply consonant with developments in ninth-century liturgical thought which arose in no small part by incorporating ideas expressed in the homiletics of the fourth century directly into the liturgy. Especially found in texts associated with the feasts of the Incarnation and Resurrection, these ideas are deeply resonant with what we have found in the *Ecclesiastical History*, showing "an eagerness to meld the past and present, thus grafting the community onto the biblical events that at once had redeemed and were redeeming them."[63] The *Chronographia* is ultimately incomprehensible apart from this ecclesial epistemology. The First-Created Day opened up a means to acquire knowledge

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ἀπαγγέλλων τῷ Θεῷ ... ἀλλὰ ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου κατοπτεύων· ... καὶ μόνος μόνῳ προσλαλεῖ Θεοῦ ... τε καὶ λαμπρότητα τὴν ἐπουράνιον λατρείαν νοερῶς ὁρῶν καὶ μυεῖται καὶ τῆς ζωαρχικῆς Τριάδος τὴν ἔλλαμψιν τοῦ μὲν Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς τὸ ἄναρχον καὶ αγέν-νητον. Meyendorff, *On the Divine Liturgy*, 90–91 (sec. 41).

60   καὶ πληρωθήσεται τό· "Ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε." Meyendorff, *On the divine liturgy*, 96 (sec. 41). Emphasis mine. As such they join fully in this experience and become "eyewitnesses of the mysteries of God, partakers of eternal life, and sharers in divine nature." Ὅθεν γενόμενοι τῶν θείων μυστηρίων αὐτόπται καὶ μέτοχοι ζωῆς ἀθανάτου καὶ κοινωνοὶ θείας φύσεως. Meyendorff, *On the divine liturgy*, 98–99 (sec. 41).

61   καὶ συγκαλοῦνται μετὰ προφητῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων καὶ ἱεραρχῶν τῶν χριστιανῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ συνελ-θεῖν καὶ ἀνακλιθῆναι μετὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακὼβ ἐν τῇ μυστικῇ τραπέζῃ τῆς βασιλείας Χριστοῦ.... οὐκ ἔτι ἐπὶ γῆς ἐσμεν_ ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ βασιλικῷ παρεστηκότες· ἐν οὐρανῷ ὅπου ὁ Χριστός ἐστι. Meyendorff, *On the divine liturgy*, 100–101 (sec. 41).

62   πρωτόκτιστος ἡμέρα τοῦ πρωτοκτίστου μηνὸς ὑπάρχουσα, καθ' ἣν ἡ ἐν Χριστῷ καινὴ κτίσις ἀρξαμένη πάντας εἰς ζωὴν ἐκ θανάτου μετήγαγε τοὺς ὀρθῶς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας. AT 465 / M 390. Emphasis mine.

63   Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects*, 76.

of the past by being grounded in the present in the same way that contemporary theologies of liturgical worship claimed that experience of the liturgy allowed Christians to participate in the reality of heaven while still on earth.[64]

As we saw in the Introduction, part of the impetus for George the Synkellos to write a new account of time was that Eusebius of Caesarea was associated with the heretical ideology of iconoclasm. George seems to have seen an opportunity in this crisis: the world needed a new, untainted account of universal historical time. This chapter has shown that the *Chronographia* not only calculated such a new tally but systematically and comprehensively reconceived of the practice of time-writing. George the Synkellos' "accurate" (ἀκριβής) *Chronographia* brought a new philosophical-theological agenda to chronography and thereby rewrote how past time acquired meaning. It did so by inviting contemporary readers to apply specific reading practices to the text. The *Chronicle* established these reading practices in two notable ways: with the fulfillment of a prophecy about the end of Jewish rule over Judea and, as we shall now see, by pressing on the typological implications of the First-Created Day.

3   Typology and Chronology: The Past Fulfilled in the Present

We have seen that though the First-Created Day was articulated with logical and chronological clarity, it was less concerned with chronological reckoning than with bringing a theological and liturgical way of thinking about time into chronology. This way of thinking applied what we might call typological reasoning—familiar to the educated elite of George and Theophanes' day from other genres such as exegetical, homiletic, and apocalyptic literature—to chronography.

The *Chronographia* argued that four dates were the First-Created Day and that somehow these were "the very same day," or "one and the same day."[65] For this reason I call these four days *instances* of the same day, rather than

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64   On the role of assumed subjectivities as an oscillation between present and historical spaces see: Derek Krueger, "Beyond Eden: Placing Adam, Eve, and Humanity in Byzantine Hymns," in *Placing Ancient Texts: The Ritual and Rhetorical Use of Space*, ed. Mika Ahuvia and Alexander Kocar, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 167–78.

65   As was discussed in section 1.2, above, this was not an assertion of an amazing feat of chronographic synchronizations of ancient calendars. It is not based on a detailed set of chronological tables. It is really a statement of the alignment of three functioning solar calendars.

four different days. Of these four instances, the first pair fell at the beginning of the *Chronography* and the second pair at the beginning of the *Chronicle*. The First-Created Day thus organized the *Chronographia* as a whole: the *Chronography* and the *Chronicle* each began with a pair of instances of the First-Created Day.[66]

Chronography			*Chronicle*		
First-Created Day (1)	+	First-Created Day (2) $\rightarrow$	First-Created Day (3)	+	First-Created Day (4)
Creation		Opening of the Ark	Incarnation		Resurrection
AM 1		AM 2234	AM 5500		AM 5534

The codicological division of the *Chronographia* into *Chronography* and *Chronicle* underscored the typological claims of the thesis. Pairing instances of the First-Created Day between the two parts of the *Chronographia* invited a reader to make sense of instances of the First-Created Day being one and the same day by means of a structural parallelism.

This parallelism invites some obvious interpretations. For instance, the Creation can be read as corresponding to the Incarnation just as the Exit from Noah's Ark corresponds to the Resurrection. The first First-Created Day of Creation was both an event, and a type of a later event: the type of the new Creation of humankind at the Incarnation. Similarly, the second First-Created Day was both an event and a type of a later event: the type of a new redemption of the world initiated by an exit from a life-enclosing box. The Creation and Noah's escape were chronologically prior but were fulfilled and given meaning in their later types, the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

It is not only the structure of the work that emphasizes these correspondences, but the text itself. The *Chronicle* had emphasized to readers who began reading the second half of the work, at AM 5434, how important the First-Created Day was to the work as a whole. First, it directed readers to discover the full meaning of the "first day" as a "convention instituted by God through Moses" by reading about the First-Created Day "at the outset of this work," in other words at AM 1 in the *Chronography*.[67] The text then went

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66   Despite the number of years between the first two instances of the First-Created Day, there are relatively few words that separate them. Since the *Chronographia* provides little historical content for this period the Creation and Opening of the Ark come in close succession: AM 1 on AT 1 / M 1 and AM 2234 on AT 32 / M 23.

67   "We said previously *at the outset of this work* that the most pressing concern set before us in it was demonstrating that the date of the divine Incarnation of the only-begotten

on to ensure that the point was clear for such readers even if they had not read the *Chronography*: the day of Christ's Resurrection was also the day of his Incarnation (i.e., his inception in the womb of the Virgin), and the day of Creation.[68]

The idea of the First-Created Day was described temporally, as something experienced in time, but its ontology required a collapsing of the timeline. The idea of the First-Created Day ultimately held that statements about the day of Creation held true for statements about the day of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection. These days were "one and the same day." This is a typology expressed in chronological terms: though the First-Created Day gained its definition from its first instance, it took its meaning from its final instance: the Resurrection at "Pascha" (or, Easter). The First-Created Day as Pascha meant claiming it as both the historical event of Resurrection, and also the celebration of the feast of the Resurrection, the "true Passover":

> For orthodox Christians, this day was rightly considered the first Pascha—[but] not with ancient leaven and in flight from *the Pharaoh perceptible to the senses* in Egypt and his ruthless taskmasters. Rather, [this day] was [rightly considered] in direct apprehension of *the Egypt perceptible to the mind*—which is evil and ignorance, and the Devil, who is its author. Surpassing the types and the shadows based in the law, [orthodox Christians] delight in the true lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ... and by his grace and redemption, they are introduced to the heavenly Jerusalem ... for he brought together existence in a lasting relationship.[69]

Son and Word of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, occurred at the completion of AM 5500 and the beginning of AM 5501, on the 25th of the Roman month of March, and according to convention instituted by God through Moses, on the first day of the first-created Hebrew month of Nisan." AT 449 / M 376–77. Similarly: "On this day also Gabriel foretold the divine conception in his salutation and greeting to the Holy Virgin." AT 1 / M 1. Note: readers of *Chronicle* would not understand what this "first-created month" referred to unless they read the explanation in the *Chronography*.

68   Connection to Creation: AT 463 / M 389. Connection to Incarnation or Annunciation: "And after [the Christ's] burial by Joseph of Arimathia and Nikodemos, he arose from the dead at dawn of the third day after this day of preparation, on the first day of the week, on the first day of the first Hebrew month of Nisan, which is forever one and the same day as 25 March." AT 473 / M 395. Note that the Incarnation occurs at AT 449 / M 376, the Resurrection at AT 473 / M 395.

69   Αὕτη Χριστιανοῖς ὀρθοδόξοις πρῶτον πάσχα καλῶς ἐχρημάτισεν, οὐκ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ καὶ φυγῇ τοῦ κατ᾽ Αἴγυπτον αἰσθητοῦ Φαραὼ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ πικρῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν καταλήψει τῆς νοητῆς Αἰγύπτου, τῆς κακίας καὶ ἀγνοίας καὶ τοῦ ταύτης ἀρχηγοῦ διαβόλου, ὑπὲρ τοὺς τύπους καὶ τὴν νομικὴν σκιὰν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἀμνῷ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ αἴροντι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου

This passage refers to the figure of a Pharaoh and Egypt "perceptible to the mind." In doing so it invites the reader to perceive the presence of a "Pharaoh" and an "Egypt" "perceptible to the mind" in the "evil and ignorance" around them.

Historical texts could take a typological method of reading scriptural literature in light of the life of Christ and use it to make sense of events befalling "the Church, as a carrier of Christ's physical presence." For, as S. Sønnesyn recently pointed out in a study on twelfth-century Latin historical texts, though the life of Christ was seen as the fulcrum of all time this did not mean that events after the life of Christ could only look backwards for meaning. In fact just the opposite, for "events narrated in the Old Testament could then be interpreted as figures fulfilled in the Church, and not only in Christ's human body," instead allowing "an interpretation of recent and contemporary history along typological lines."[70] In this way of thinking past events continued to have a profound relevance to the present, in that the present gave those past events their real meaning. Present types reveal the meaning of past events, a meaning that could not be perceived at the time of that past event. A New Pharaoh will be similar enough to an Old Pharaoh to establish a typological relation, but the *meaning* of the old will be rewritten by identifying its relationship to the new even as this relation changes nothing about the historicity of the old pharaoh. Paradoxically, to identify a past type one must have already identified the fulfillment, the reality, in the present.

Byzantinists have identified such ideas in the prophetic typologies of empire found in eschatological literatures, especially the tradition of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.[71] While scholars of the tradition of historical typology or figuration may be said to focus more on the concept as an

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κατατρυφῶσιν … καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι καὶ ἀπολυτρώσει πρὸς τὴν ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπειγομένοις … συντάξας τὸ εἶναι τῇ σχετικῇ ἀλληλουχίᾳ. AT 464 / M 389–90. Adler and Tuffin's translation slightly modified; emphases mine.

70   Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, "Eternity in Time, Unity in Particularity: The Theological Basis of Typological Interpretations in Twelfth-Century Historiography," in *La typologie biblique comme forme de pensée dans l'historiographie médiévale*, ed. Marek Thue Kretschmer, Textes et études du Moyen Âge 75 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 77–95, quotation at 86.

71   See for instance, András Kraft, "The Last Emperor Topos in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition," *Byzantion* 82 (2012): 213–57. Paul Magdalino, "The End of Time in Byzantium," in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, by Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder, Millennium Studies 16 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 119–34. And Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses." Paul J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources," *American Historical Review* 73, no. 4 (1968): 997–1018 remains foundational.

exegetical, theological practice,[72] here the *Chronographia* brought these ideas into historiography, inviting its readers to read looking for types familiar to apocalyptic literature—such as a new Pharaoh or the Antichrist himself. It invited readings that made sense of the present by finding their types in the past.[73]

Typological history or figurative chronography abstracts, idealizes, or typifies a relation between two events. At its core, typological thinking is a form of allegory that depends on the actual historicity of the two events it relates.[74] Typological thinking is only typological thinking *when* it is historical. As Eric Auerbach's classic discussion of *figura* in medieval literature points out, typological *figurae* needed *two* real and valid historical events.[75] The work of typology is to identify and signify the relationship between these two events based on the type of one of them. But for the entire process of reasoning to work, *both* events must be understood as real and valid actual historical occurrences identifiable in time and place. In other words, a trustworthy account of past and present is necessary for typology to have any ground to build on. As Sønnesyn has put it, "the notion of real events as *figurae* of other real events seems to have led to an increased focus on historical events; it was only

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72   This is changing. The starting point for Western medieval typological thinking is still found in Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 3 vols, trans. Michael Sebanc and E. M. Macierowski, Ressourcement (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998–2009) from *Exégèse médiéval: Les quatre sens de l'écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris: Aubier: 1959–1964). For a specific ninth-century example that *does* consider historical framings of such types see Mary Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne," in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 114–61.

73   In this focus I find perhaps the most similarities with the approaches to be found in Syriac apocalyptic literature, which had a decidedly presentist orientation so far as their aims can be defined as apologetic. See: Gerrit J. Reinink, "Ps.-Methodius: A Concept of History in Response to the Rise of Islam," in *The Byzantine and Early-Islamic Near East, I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad, SLAEI 1 (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1992), 147–87; Gerrit J. Reinink, "From Apocalyptics to Apologetics: Early Syriac Reactions to Islam," in Brandes and Schmieder, *Endzeiten*, 75–87.

74   Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Theory and History of Literature 9 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 11–76. My usage draws on the approaches to typology (and its relationship to history and historical writing) that have developed amongst both scholars of Byzantium and the Latin West. The relevant term *type* (and *typology*) is derived etymologically from Greek (τύπος, τύποι). The Latin term would in most cases be *figura*, though *figura* is used for a range of Greek terms including *schema* (σχῆμα).

75   This is what separates *figurae* or *types* from allegories: in literary allegories the second item in the relationship is an abstract concept.

through knowledge of what actually happened that any spiritual, transcendent meaning might be discerned."[76]

The conceptual parallels between the First-Created Day pairs brought the past into the reader's liturgical present. In a general sense, across the Mediterranean among the Carolingians there are parallels for the use of biblical types as a *correctio* for political behaviors,[77] or the interconnection of a historical present with a historicized liturgy.[78] But we have identified a more deeply literary connection here. The patriarch Germanos' *Historia Ecclesiastica* contained the idea of a present "earthly heaven" in its description of the liturgy of Hagia Sophia.[79] Byzantine Romans like Germanos not only saw models of Christ in the "types and shadows" of the ancient past but saw Christ's own past life on earth as types for their experience of his presence in both the offering of the Eucharist at every liturgical mass and in the entire annual christological festal cycle. Typological thinking based on the theological relationship between humankind and divine existence made it possible to read texts and events from the past as "types and shadows" of a future-leaning present. In bringing Byzantine liturgical and ecclesial theology into the practice of chronological reckoning, the First-Created Day thesis brought a particular kind of typological thinking directly into the historical account of a chronography.

4   The First-Created Day and the Present Age

As discussed in chapter 1 (section 2), the *Chronicle* began with AM 5434 (our 63 BC) because this was the year it held a prophecy about a "non-Jew" ruling over Judea was fulfilled. Why was the reign of a non-Jew over Judea significant, and how was it seen as the fulfillment of a prophecy? George the Synkellos proposed his epoch by reading of a passage from the Book of Genesis as a prophetic utterance that connected the reign of a non-Jew over Judea with the

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76   Sønnesyn, "Eternity in Time," 92–93. Emphasis mine.
77   Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past: Hraban, Dhuoda, Radbert," in *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 87–102.
78   Rosamond McKitterick, "Liturgy and History in the Early Middle Ages," in *Medieval Cantors and Their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800–1500*, ed. A. B. Kraebel, Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, and Margot E. Fassler, Writing History in the Middle Ages 3 (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2017), 23–40.
79   As discussed in section 2.2.

advent of the Messiah *and also* the beginning of the era of the Roman empire.[80]
The passage in question (*Genesis* 49:10) finds Jacob addressing his son Judah.

> A ruler shall not fail from Judah,
> nor a prince from his loins,
> until there come the things stored up for him,
> and he is the expectation of nations.[81]

George the Synkellos read into this text to derive the meaning he desired. The
statement that "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins,
until" was taken to mean that the second half of the sentence would come
to pass when a non-Jew had begun to reign over Judea. The "expectation of
nations" was personified as the anointed Christ, and "the things stored up for
him" understood to be the events of his life.[82] Thus, the Messiah, the Christ,
would come when a non-Jew ruled over Judea. The *Chronicle* asserted this pas-
sage was a prophecy fulfilled in AM 5534: George took the non-Jew in question

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80   The intertwined chronologies of Christ and the Roman emperors can be found through-
      out the *Chronographia* in passages such as one already discussed in the Introduction, sec-
      tion 3: AT 244 / M 197–98. For instance, to set up that passage the account of the Assyrians
      and their sources were brought to a conclusion even though the Assyrians' successors,
      the Medes, would not be introduced for fifty more pages (end of the Assyrians in AM 4675
      at AT 239 / M 193–94; beginning of the rule of the Medes in AM 4676 at AT 287 / M 233–
      34). The *Chronographia* skipped ahead of the chronology of other empires and peoples
      to permit the conjunctions in that passage. Another proximate example: "This was the
      4330th year from Adam. From the birth of Abraham and the forty-third year of Ninos
      the second king of the Assyrian empire [AM 3312/3], there is a total of 1018 years. From
      the birth of Moses, which occurred in the forty-sixth year of Inachos the first king of the
      Argives, AM 3738, there is a total of 592 years up to the conquest of Troy, notwithstanding
      the view of Eusebios, whose error consists of an omission of 216 years." AT 246 / M 199.
81   As, for George the Synkellos, the canonical Old Testament was the Greek text of the
      Septuagint, I will provide the text as it appears in that version: οὐκ ἐκλείψει ἄρχων ἐξ
      Ἰούδα ǁ καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, ǁ ἕως ἐὰν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, ǁ καὶ αὐτὸς
      προσδοκία ἐθνῶν. Contrast an English translation of the Hebrew text: "The sceptre will not
      depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs
      shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his." The prophetic interpretation
      surely strikes us as strained, but it is worth noting that chapter 49 of Genesis began with
      an invitation to read passages to come as prophetic: "Then Jacob called for his sons and
      said: 'Gather round so that I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.'"
82   George took the "him" (αὐτός) at the end of the sentence to have a different referent than
      "Judah" in the first two lines. It would be entirely possible (in fact, it is the grammatically
      correct reading) to take the passage's statement to mean that *Judah* will not fail to have a
      ruler until there come the things "stored up for" Judah.

to be Herod, the King of Judea under the Romans.[83] This creative exegesis alone explains why the *Chronicle* begins three quarters of a century before Christ's birth—why the *Chronographia* was divided at AM 5534 instead of at AM 5500 or any other point—even though the work is so clearly centered on the coming of the Christ as the third instance of the First-Created Day.[84]

In the discussion of this passage in chapter 1, I focused on the significance of George's reading of this passage for his division of time into past and present. Here I am concerned with a different consideration. George's reading is consonant with the typological thinking I have identified in the First-Created Day thesis, and the entire interpretative logic of the rest of the *Chronographia* is exemplified in the way that the text connects the advent of Christ and the *imperium* of the Romans. In a literal sense this beginning to the present age signaled that the present era was the era of universal imperial Rome. In a prophetic sense, the victorious Pompey incorporating Judea into the Roman Empire as a kingdom ruled by Herod the Idumean was the beginning of the present era because the reign of Herod was the signal for the coming of both Christ and the coming of the Roman Christian Empire. Such interdependent connections were essential in any universal chronological system, but the *Chronographia* was not simply synchronizing rulers nor (as Eusebius had done) merely connecting the Incarnation to *Romanitas*, but setting both Incarnation and *Romanitas* in connection to Roman rule over Judea.

In the typological-chronological system of the *Chronographia* it was essential to specifically establish that Christ's birth followed the conquest of Jerusalem and so by divine plan synchronized the coming of the Messiah with the reigns of the Roman emperors.[85] Programmatic statements of this goal are made in the beginning of the *Chronicle* in a direct, authorial voice:

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83   Herod was considered a non-Jew since his father, Aretas, was an Idumean, and his mother Kypris (or, Cypros) was an "Arab."

84   As explained in chapter 1, the *Chronicle* did not begin with what we would see as the most obvious candidates for its own present era: either the Incarnation of Christ, or the reign of Julius Caesar, or the reign of Augustus Caesar. Instead, Synkellos placed his chronological division with a narrative of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in AM 5429 and Herod's ascension in AM 5434.

85   On the importance of Herod: "Afrikanos fails to say how many years Hyrkanos was ruler of the Jews ... in addition to this he cuts off three years from Herod's rule ... if we grant this as true, Herod will be found to have died in the first year of the Incarnation of the Lord and God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, which is totally at odds with the teachings of the gospels" (AT 445 / M 373). See the link of Troy to Aeneas to the Latins and then to Romulus in AT 248 / M 200–201. See George's careful discussion of the dates for the reign of Augustus surrounding the Incarnation: Augustus Year 15 = AM 5472 (AT 450) Augustus

Although the preparation of this material has not been an easy task for me, I wished to show how, when the divine incarnation of the only-begotten Son and Word of God—our Saviour Jesus Christ—was imminent, a leader from Judah and a ruler from his loins had ceased, in accordance with the prediction of the patriarch Jacob.[86]

Readers are told that the *entire goal* of preparing the material for the *Chronographia* was in order to make a chronological connection between the incarnation of the Christ and the accession of Herod as a king under the Romans. Directly after noting that Pompey "made the Jews tributary to the Romans,"[87] the *Chronographia* explains that this initiated his new-found power within the empire:

> After arriving in Rome and leading the procession celebrating his many victories [in Judea], Pompey was publicly proclaimed *imperator* and joined in an alliance of friendship with Gaius Julius Caesar, becoming his son-in-law through his daughter Julia.

In the *Chronographia*'s account Pompey is thus the first *imperator*, the prelude to the coming of Julius Caesar and the link, via a prophecy, of the advent of imperial Roman rule in world history to the coming of the Christ. The reign of a non-Jew over Judea not only marks the ascent of the Roman empire but defines this ascent as the present and final era of the world, into which the Christ came. The logic of this chronological division of the present era from the ancient past was based on determining the meaning of the past through prophecy. This interpretative mode rests on the premise that the past left signals to the present for how to understand the meaning of the present as the fulfillment of the past.[88]

Year 1 = AM 5458 (AT 454); Augustus Year 41 = AM 5499; Augustus 42 = AM 5500; Herod 32 = AM 5500 (AT 454).

86   AT 433 / M 362. See the note on Genesis 49:10 at AT 433n5. Later (AT 447/374) the *Chronographia* calls this a "prophecy of Moses" in a reference to exactly the same quotation.

87   AT 432 / M 360.

88   So the *Chronographia*: "It is clear that the prophecies are put forth in a somewhat symbolic way." AT 470 / M 393. Note the description of Hippolytus of Portus who made prophecies on the basis of "a table of the sixteen-year Paschal cycle." As a result, "he was for the Church a prophetic river of living water." (AT 516/ M 438).

The *Chronographia*'s First-Created Day thesis—and its defining the present age from AM 5434 (63 BC) through the fulfillment of a prophecy—would indicate to a Byzantine Roman to read the *Chronographia* in a typological-prophetic mode. This mode would mean that the past had meaning for the present through "types and shadows": the past is lesser, the shadow of its future. But this did not mean that the idea of time in the *Chronographia* was backwards-looking. In fact, just the opposite. The Incarnation is not celebrated as a "type" of the Creation; the Resurrection is not celebrated as a "type" of the opening of the Ark. The earlier "types" of the First-Created Day (Creation and Exit from the Ark) do not dominate the latter ones (Incarnation and Resurrection). Instead, the latter dominate the former; typological thought holds the end of the past to be the future present.

5   The Thesis of the First Created Day: Chronology and Typology

In his First-Created Day thesis George the Synkellos combined the idea that Christians experienced God's eternity in liturgical worship with a linear historical chronology. As such it was unprecedented in chronography. Not only did the First-Created Day redefine the first day of calculable time, but it also proposed a new way of thinking about the relationship between eternal divinity and human history. No previous chronographer had asserted that the way to make sense of divine occurrences in the human past at the Incarnation and Resurrection was to understand them as the same day, as multiple instances of a day on and in which temporally disparate historical events were gathered together as though the linear thread of time was a drawstring cinching together the fabric of time itself. And yet, that is exactly what the First-Created Day thesis asserted.

My approach to interpreting the idea of the First-Created Day in this chapter has been directly informed by work in genre theory.[89] Genre theorists do not treat genres as stable or static but as a way for authors to communicate to their audience about how to read, or view, a work. These communications take place through cues or references which "make present ... the text's presence

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89   On Byzantine chronicles in a wider cultural and literary context see Alexander P. Kazhdan, in collaboration with Lee Francis Sherry and Christina Angelidi, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850)*, Research Series 2 (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 1999); Alexander P. Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature (850–1000)*, ed. Christine Angelidi, Research Series 4 (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 2006).

in the world."[90] That is, textual cues do not alert a reader to a single genre and then step aside. Instead, they continue to negotiate with the reader's expectations by situating the text in relationship to multiple genres. Clarity is achieved when the text achieves a social "presence," when meaning is shared within a community including author and audience.[91] George the Synkellos' project did not communicate by strictly adhering to the supposed rules of a "traditional" chronography.[92] Instead, as we saw in the Introduction, the *Chronographia* was explicit about claiming to be a new "master work."[93] It acquired authority by redefining how chronography worked, and what readers could expect to learn from a chronography. I recovered these claims by following textual cues of how to interpret the central idea of the First-Created Day.

The *Chronographia* connected the typologies of the First-Created Day to the use of a prophecy to define the present age (the era covered in the *Chronicle*, AM 5434–6305) to convey that the way to read its narratives was in a typological-prophetic mode. In the typological mode of the *Chronographia*, later events are fulfillments of their earlier types: the Incarnation is not celebrated as a "type" of the Creation, but vice versa; the Resurrection is not celebrated as a "type" of the opening of the Ark, but the Ark is a "shadow" of the Resurrection, the reality to come. These First-Created Day typologies are in line with the idea that worshippers in the churches of Constantinople communed with the continued presence of the eternal Christ via priests who revealed the "earthly heaven (ἐπίγειος οὐρανός) in which the heavenly (ἐπουράνιος) God dwells and walks about."[94]

The *Chronographia* developed its typological model through a liturgical idea never before applied to chronology, the idea of the First-Created Day. In doing so it prompted a reader to read the narrative looking for how early events could or would be set up as "types and shadows" of events that came later, an ancient past coming to fulfillment in the recent past or present. The implications were that the current age is the constant fulfillment of past moments that are lesser shadows of the present, their future. In the *Chronographia*'s

90   John Frow, *Genre*, New Critical Idiom (London: Routledge, 2006), 109 citing Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2002).

91   Frow, *Genre*, 114–123.

92   Contra Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Tradition from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD*, vol. 1, *A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 227–32.

93   Jesse W. Torgerson, "Could Isidore's Chronicle Have Delighted Cicero? Using the Concept of Genre to Compare Ancient and Medieval Chronicles," *Medieval Worlds* 3 (2016): 79–81.

94   As above, section 2.2.

formulation these shadows are types "of the mind" rather than "of the senses." The idea of an Egypt "perceptible to the senses" and a Pharaoh "perceptible to the mind" back the assertion that "orthodox [i.e., Byzantine] Christians" who "delight in the true lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world … and by his grace and redemption are introduced to the heavenly Jerusalem"[95] can now "apprehend" a diabolical evil characterized by a lack of understanding, an "Egypt perceptible to the mind, which is evil and ignorance."

In this way the *Chronographia* forced its readers to confront the theological idea of a truly present divine in real historical terms. It primed readers to understand their own present in this specific mode of historical thought. The reader would need to accept that their present contained the meaning of past events. The reader would take these "shadows" and use them to bring together "existence in a lasting relationship." Readers in this interpretative community would understand descriptions of past events in relation to their present, seeing the past as types of what is being fulfilled around them. Such a presentist theory of historical interpretation placed a high demand upon the interpretative abilities of readers.

As we will see, this had immediate political implications. The *Chronographia*'s account of Emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) portrayed him as a new Pharaoh.[96] Every scholar to comment on this portrayal has noted the clear connection between the Ten Evils of Nikephoros and the ten plagues which God visited upon the Egyptian Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus. What scholars have not admitted is that this connection does not make any literal sense. In the Biblical account it was not Pharaoh who enacted the ten evil plagues; they were done by God *against* Pharaoh, and *against* the Egyptians as Pharaoh's people. The only way the plagues make sense as types is if they are read as a sort of inversion of the historic plagues meted out by God upon the ancient Egyptians under Pharaoh in the book of the Exodus.[97] That is, the Pharaoh of

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95 The full passage is as follows: Αὕτη Χριστιανοῖς ὀρθοδόξοις πρῶτον πάσχα καλῶς ἐχρημάτισεν, οὐκ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ καὶ φυγῇ τοῦ κατ' Αἴγυπτον αἰσθητοῦ Φαραὼ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ πικρῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν, ἀλλ' ἐν καταλήψει τῆς νοητῆς Αἰγύπτου, τῆς κακίας καὶ ἀγνοίας καὶ τοῦ ταύτης ἀρχηγοῦ διαβόλου, ὑπὲρ τοὺς τύπους καὶ τὴν νομικὴν σκιὰν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἀμνῷ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ αἴροντι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου κατατρυφῶσιν … καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι καὶ ἀπολυτρώσει πρὸς τὴν ἄνω Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπειγομένοις … συντάξας τὸ εἶναι τῇ σχετικῇ ἀλληλουχίᾳ. AT 464 / M 389–90.

96 From the moment of his accession to the throne the *Chronography* incessantly castigates Nikephoros I as deeply avaricious with a force applied to no other emperor. In the entry for AM 6295 (AD 802) the chronicle introduces Nikephoros I with an epithet: the "universal devourer" (ὁ παμφάγος). The title is only used of Nikephoros, and only in one other place: the entry for AM 6302 (AD 810)—in other words, to close out the section.

97 Similarly, Constantine V's portrayal as the "Forerunner" (see chapter 5, section 4.2). There are a total of 16 "Old Testament references" before the final entries of the *Chronography*

Exodus was a ruler standing in the way of God's unmovable providence and getting punished for it. Pharaoh's "fulfillment," Nikephoros, is a ruler trying to punish the Christian community and so attacking God's very providence (literally: *oikonomia*). Through this typology the *Chronographia* made Nikephoros I no Pharaoh "of the senses" (in other words a literal Pharaoh) but a "Pharaoh of the mind" who surpassed the Egyptian type by revealing an "evil and ignorance" that could actually overpower the Chosen Romans.[98] Nikephoros' typological referent of Pharaoh is thus both a way of making sense of history, but much more than that it is the text of a prophecy. It proposes a reality which is still to be fulfilled by an astute reader's interpretation in the present-future eschatological moment. As we will see in the next chapter, the *Preface* of Theophanes made the participatory, interpretative implications of the First-Created Day thesis explicit in its definition of the *Chronographia*'s reader.

(i.e., AM 6303–6305), but only three could be considered a simple historical typology, expressed with the idea of "the new." The rest can only be understood through the *Chronographia*'s idea of "shadows," as some kind of typoligical inversion.

98   Shay Eshel, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, MM 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

Reader: The Invitation of the *Preface* of Theophanes

It is essential to determine how any medieval work expected audiences, or *the reader*, to approach the task of reading.[1] The previous chapter's elucidation of the First-Created Day thesis already implicitly established some key components of how the *Chronographia* indicated its readers should read the work, such as that true knowledge of the past was accessible as grace in the form of the communal experience of *ekklesia*. The προοίμιον of Theophanes, the *Preface* to his portion of the work, addresses the task of the reader much more directly. The *Preface* was placed in manuscripts of the *Chronographia* between the portions attributed to George and Theophanes, between AM 5776 and AM 5777 (at our 284 AD).[2] As such, it explained the connection between the portion of the text that had gone before and the text to follow. Importantly for our purposes, it did so by laying out the role of the reader through an *apologia* for authorship, introducing Theophanes' authorial contributions by describing him as George's first reader.

The *Preface* explained that George had given Theophanes the ἀφορμαὶ to complete the *Chronographia*. Long translated into English as "materials" (in the sense of "notes"), this word has dominated discussion of the *Preface* and of the relationship between the two authors for decades. It is now understood as

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1   Stephen Bradford Partridge and Erik Kwakkel, eds., *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); building on Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Study of textual evidence for expectations placed upon a reader must be informed by Stanley E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

2   The *Preface* is in many manuscripts of the *Chronography* (BnF, *Coisl.* 133; BnF *Grec* 1711; BAV, *Barb. gr.* 553; BAV, *Vat. gr.* 154) including two of the three ninth-century manuscripts discussed in chapter 1. It is complete in *Wake Greek 5* and partially damaged in *PG 1710*. Filippo Ronconi has argued in "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane'" in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 121–47 that based on abstractions from the now-missing quires of *PG 1710* the entire *Preface* was there before the text was rebound. It nevertheless remains possible that this manuscript was dismembered and re-bound precisely to add in a *Praefatio, ex post facto*. That said, all manuscripts (including those of the ninth century) which contain the *Preface* identify it as the work of Theophanes.

the "impetus," "starting point," or "idea."[3] In this chapter, I take this new consensus as my starting point for a thorough re-reading of the *Preface*, demonstrating that the *Preface* made the *persona* of reader a phenomenon of both past and present by locating the impetus for the work in the relationships between author, reader, and text. The *Preface* locates *auctoritas* in the authorial persona of George the Synkellos but makes clear that this author requires a reader—Theophanes—willing to complete the *Chronographia*. This definition of the nature of Theophanes' authorship as grounded in his role as a reader is key to my re-reading of the *Chronographia*. I read the end of the *Preface* as implying that Theophanes' assumption of the persona of author necessitates someone else assuming his role as reader. This role is fulfilled by the new, *present* reader taking up the readerly role of Theophanes, just as Theophanes had taken up the authorial role of George. In this way the *Preface* communicated to the present reader that the impetus which was passed between George and Theophanes now obliged the reader to likewise take up Theophanes' task. Like Theophanes the present reader must "complete what was missing" by interpreting the *Chronographia*, by finding "something beneficial in this labor of ours," and by "reaping no small benefit from attending to the deeds of old."

1   The *Preface*: From Authorship to Readership

The *Preface* to the *Chronicle* of Theophanes has persistently been read as documentary evidence about the two authors of the *Chronographia* project: George the Synkellos and Theophanes the Confessor. That is, Byzantinists' interpretations of the rhetoric of the *Preface* have been determined by their positions on the authorship of the *Chronicle*. R.-J. Lilie (and more recently J. Ljubarskij) emphasized the "Theophanes" in the *Preface* must be the abbot of Megas Agros of whom Theodore of Stoudios wrote a hagiographical account.[4] C. Mango (and more recently W. Treadgold) asserted "Theophanes" wrote the *Preface* but did not do the work he claimed: they hold that the *Chronicle* was mostly

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3   A point made most recently by Constantin Zuckerman, "Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler, or, A Story of Square Brackets," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 38–40.

4   Jakov Ljubarskij, "Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structure in Byzantine Historical Writings," *Symbolae Osloenses* 73, no. 1 (1998): 5–22.

written by George the Synkellos.[5] For P. Speck a different Theophanes than the Confessor is the Theophanes of the *Preface*: "Der 'zweite' Theophanes."[6] Picking up this thread, C. Zuckerman suggested scholars set aside the Confessor and focus on the authorial persona of Theophanes as "the Chronicler."[7] P. Yannopoulos has pushed back on these proposals to distance Theophanes the (co-)author of the *Chronicle* from the historical figure Theophanes of Sigriane, the "Confessor" and abbot of Megas Agros.[8] For Yannopoulos, the need to debate the nature of Theophanes' authorship in the first place, as well as the history of the transmission and circulation of the text over the course of the ninth century, does not necessitate either denying that the known historical Theophanes can be identified with the Theophanes of the *Chronicle*, or going to the extreme of asserting that no Theophanes was involved as author at all.[9] Nevertheless, A. Kompa has identified clear linguistic similarities between the language of the *Preface* and the language of the latter entries of the *Chronicle*.[10]

This scholarly impasse is my own impetus to make a new start. I do so by re-reading how the *Preface* defines the relationship between George, Theophanes, and their co-authored text in light of what it tells us not about these historical persons, but in light of how it asked the reader to read the text in their present moment. Paying attention to the connection between the contents of the *Chronographia* and the circumstances of its composition is long overdue. Between I. Ševčenko's summation of "The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800," and P. Varona's examination of "Chronological Polemics in Ninth-Century Constantinople,"[11] there has been too little work

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5   Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), li–lxiii; Warren T. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Warren T. Treadgold, "The Life and Wider Significance of George Syncellus," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 9–30.

6   Paul Speck, "Der 'zweite' Theophanes: Eine These zur Chronographie des Theophanes," in *Varia V*, Poikila Byzantina 13 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1994), 431–83.

7   Zuckerman, "Theophanes the Confessor," 31–52.

8   Panayotis A. Yannopoulos, *Théophane de Sigriani le confesseur (759–818): Un héros orthodoxe du second iconoclasme*, Collection Histoire 5 (Brussels Éditions Safran, 2013).

9   Panayotis A. Yannopoulos, "Un fantôme historique: 'l'autre Theophane,'" *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 113, no. 1 (2020): 189–218.

10   Andrzej Kompa, "Gnesioi Filoi: The Search for George Syncellus' and Theophanes the Confessor's Own Words, and the Authorship of Their Oeuvre," *Studia Ceranea* 5 (2015): 155–230.

11   Ihor Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 279–93; Patricia Varona, "Chronographical Polemics in Ninth-Century

on framing the *Chronographia* as an event of its own moment. This is surely a phenomenon of the persistent questions—already discussed—concerning both source material and authorship of the *Chronographia*. But however reasonable the *lacuna* may be, we need to address it. The new approach to the *Preface* which I will articulate here offers a means of facilitating the entry of the *Chronographia* into our present historiographical discourses, allowing us to ask how it sought to shape the deeds of its present audience through its presentation of the past.

To do so I first need to address a long history of reading the *Preface*. Almost all of the ink spilt over this short epistle to the reader has focused on the implications of a single word—ἀφορμάς (nom. pl., ἀφορμαί)—for how we understand the authorship and composition of the work.[12] Since the 1970s Byzantinists have discussed how to translate this word's meaning in the shadow of the much larger debate over authorship of the *Chronicle*.[13] This is because C. Mango's understanding of ἀφορμαὶ was the touchstone for his proposal that the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes was in truth the work of

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Constantinople: George Synkellos, Iconoclasm and the Greek Chronicle Tradition," *Eranos* 108 (2017): 117–36.

12   MS 1 / dB 4. In classical and classicizing Greek, meanings for ἀφορμή work with the general sense of "a starting point." The following definitions are from Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon: New Edition*, rev. and aug. Henry Stuart Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968): 1) *Generally*: origin, occasion, pretext; inducement, instigation, or incitement; 2) *Materially*: the means to begin something, especially resources for war; also, resources for work or a task; 3) *Economically*: capital or an asset for business; 4) *Rhetorically*: subject or base of the argument as in the fourth-century Menander Rhetor: "ὑποθέσεις καὶ ἀφορμαὶ λόγων" (the theses and subjects of speeches); 5) *Aptitude or inclination*. Alternatively, in the *koine* Greek of the New Testament the word appears only in the singular and is "an opportunity" or "an excuse" to do something reprehensible. Romans 7:8, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 11:12; Galatians 5:13; 1 Timothy 5:14. The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) provides examples of contemporary usage. As found using the TLG's search tool (www.tlg.uci.edu), in the full text of the *Chronicle* the word appears in the singular in this same sense, but more specifically to mean an opportunity for a military or political attack. Five times the word appears in the *Chronicle* in passages that are not quotations: MS 50 / dB 30.9 (AM 5286); MS 382 / dB 260.3 (AM 6079); MS 658 / dB 480.1 (AM 6295); MS 665 / dB 484.25 (AM 6361); MS 686 / dB 503.17 (AM 6305). It appears once in a quotation of the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas: MS 271 / dB 179.6 (AM 6021), and once in a quotation from George of Pisidia, the Emperor Heraclius' (r. 610–642) panegyrist, which C. Mango translates as "lessons" from a mock battle that the soldiers later applied to real engagements. This cannot be what Theophanes meant by the use of the plural noun in his prefatory statement.

13   Cyril A. Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?," *Zborknik Radova Vizantinoškog Instituta* 18 (1978): 9–18.

George the Synkellos.[14] C. Mango believed that when the *Preface* stated George gave Theophanes ἀφορμαὶ it meant that George gave Theophanes materials for finishing the *Chronographia* in the literal sense of a box of papers, notes, and drafts.[15]

It is clear to all scholars that George must have helped his continuator in some tangible way. However, I propose a different phrase in the *Preface* as our source on that exchange. The voice of Theophanes states that τήν τε βίβλον ἣν συνέταξε καταλέλοιπε ("he [George the Synkellos] left behind the book [codex] which he had set in order"). Scholars may apply any and all of the current theories of authorship to the question of this book which apparently passed between the two authors, such as whether it was only half written, whether it contained excerpts from the relevant sources, whether it was bound or in loose quires, and so on. Shifting the focus of the discussion of authorship away from the ἀφορμαὶ allows us to discuss the term's significance from a different perspective. When the *Preface* states that George the Synkellos *also* gave ἀφορμαὶ to Theophanes, it uses a different verb from its statement about the material transfer of the book, indicating the exchange was of another sort. What is the *Preface* saying was exchanged?[16]

To answer the question, I turn to the oeuvre of Theodore of Studios, abbot of the Studios Monastery in Constantinople. Theodore is the most prolific extant writer of the milieu of the *Chronographia*, and in his surviving works he used the term "ἀφορμαί" several times. On each comparable occasion Theodore of Studios used the distinctive plural to mean an "impetus" in the sense of a "rhetorical subject" or "idea."[17] We could therefore translate the relevant sentence as:

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14   MS 1 / dB 4.

15   Commenting on his own translation of the *Preface*, C. Mango states that "Theophanes does not claim for himself any other part than that of George's executor and continuator. He openly says that George had provided him with the materials (ἀφορμάς; nominative plural: ἀφορμαί) for completing the work." Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lv.

16   Previous alternatives to C. Mango's translation, with which the following argument is in agreement, include "Anfang" (beginning) or "Anregung" (idea, or stimulus) in Jan Olof Rosenqvist, *Die byzantinische Literatur: Vom 6. Jahrhundert bis zum Fall Konstantinopels 1453* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 54. Or, "a general stimulus, or even a bequest of material assistance rather than to detailed drafts and notes put at Theophanes' disposal," in Ševčenko, "Search for the Past in Byzantium," 287.

17   In Theodore's works, the plural form ἀφορμαί appears nine times in comparable contexts. Thrice these take the meaning previously reserved for the singular, an opportunity: *Sermones Catecheseos Magnae* 106. Ed. Josephus Cozza-Luzi, *S. patris nostri Theodori Studitae, Magnae catecheseos sermones*, Nova Patrum Bibliotheca 10/1 (Cat. 78–111)

> [George] both left behind the book [or, codex] he had written and bequeathed the *impetus* [*rhetorical subject* or, *idea*] to complete what was missing.[18]

This translation not only makes the most conceptual sense, but a reading of the full *Preface* makes clear that this epistle to the reader hinges on the idea that George passed on not just material items but an idea or impetus when he handed over the project. This exchange was not simply about editing a text; it was about a promise to fulfill a plan, to bring an idea to fruition.

The previous chapter would suggest that one obvious candidate for the "impetus" or "idea" of the work is the First-Created Day thesis. We saw that the First-Created Day re-defined the practice of chronography as an investigation which drew on philosophy, theology, and ecclesiology to unveil the meaning of the past in the present. We also saw that the way the First-Created Day re-defined the study of historical time relied on the idea that true knowledge of the past involved participation in Christian worship. That formulation would, by definition, push the making of meaning from the *Chronographia* out of the authorial past and into the readerly present.

That historical works had such an agenda and that historians need to study historical works in light of their contemporary polemical and rhetorical goals is so widely accepted at present that in what follows I take this point as a

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(Rome: Bibliotheca Vaticana et Typi Vaticani, 1905), 130.7; *Parva Catechesis* 103. Ed. Emmanuel Auvray, *Sancti patris nostri et confessoris Theodori Studitis praepositi Parva catechesis* (Paris: Apud Victorem Lecoffre, 1891), 353.23; Μεγάλη κατήχησις 29. Ed. Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Τοῦ ὁσίου Θεοδώρου τοῦ Στουδίτου Μεγάλη Κατήχησις: Βιβλίον Δεύτερον* [*Tou osiou Theodōrou tou Stouditou Megalē Katēchēsis: Biblion Deuteron*] (St. Petersburg: Kirschbaum, 1904), 208.9. It was used once to indicate an aptitude or inclination, connected with τρόπος (manner or way) and τόπος (an opportunity). *Epistula* 346. Ed. Georgios Fatouros, *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, 2 vols., CFHB 31 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 2:484.10. It was used twice in the sense of "means" or "resources," conceived of in a spiritual or emotional sense rather than "materials needed" in the sense of stationery and books. In these cases, "material" could technically be the correct English concept, but the idiomatic sense is really completely different for τὰς ἀφορμὰς τῆς παρηγορίας and τὰς ἀφορμὰς τῆς παρακλήσεως. The only way English "material" works is in the usage by comedians to mean "material" for a joke or a routine. Theodore uses "ἀφορμαί" for the occasion, topic, idea, or even inspiration for a return letter. *Epistula* 298. Ed. Fatouros, 2:437.24; for praise of St. Bartholomew. *Sermo de Sancto Bartholomeo Apostolo*. Ed. Ulla Westerbergh, *Anastasius Bibliothecarius: Sermo Theodori Studitae de Sancto Bartholomeo Apostolo*, AUS SLS 9 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1963), 42.17; and, for himself to compose a treatise. *Parva Catechesis* 117. Ed. Auvray, 403.2.

18   ἡμῖν, ὡς γνησίοις φίλοις, τήν τε βίβλον ἣν συνέταξε καταλέλοιπε καὶ ἀφορμὰς παρέσχε τὰ ἐλλείποντα ἀναπληρῶσαι. dB 4.1–2.

premise, rather than something that needs to be demonstrated.[19] As L. Neville recently summarized, historical texts were "engaged in moral evaluation of the past as they told their histories" signaling to audiences "who they should admire and emulate, and whose behaviors they should avoid … with the explicit purpose of presenting models of behavior."[20] However, though we know that histories must be read as literature, that their literariness must be foregrounded, it remains unclear *how* to do so because, as R. Macrides has pointed out, "there is no single way to read the histories; there are perhaps as many ways as there are texts … Commentaries on individual histories are urgently needed."[21] Furthermore and more pointedly for our task here, this literariness can be celebrated and described on its own merits, but it was not an end in itself. The rhetorics of historical writing were at the service of a particular political end. It is not only that these works contain more than mere potential political implications, or that they would "praise or condemn specific figures, but that many [historical texts] were written *specifically to do so*."[22] J. Marincola put the point very clearly: "the use of the past is always intimately connected with the present, and often (though not always) with structures of power and authority."[23] Our goal must be to describe the entanglement of literary rhetorical craft with present political and cultural goals by asking "how are

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19   Nancy F. Partner, ed., *Writing Medieval History*, Writing History (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005). On the Ancient context of historiography as received by the Byzantines: John Marincola, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

20   Leonora Neville, "Why Did the Byzantines Write History?," in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić (Belgrade: Serbian National Committee of the Association Internationale des Études Byzantines, 2016), 269.

21   Ruth J. Macrides, "How the Byzantines Wrote History," in Marjanović-Dušanić, *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, 262; see too: Dmitry E. Afinogenov, "Some Observations on Genres of Byzantine Historiography," *Byzantion* 62 (1992): 13–33.

22   Emphasis mine. Anthony Kaldellis, "The Manufacture of History in the Later Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Rhetorical Templates and Narrative Ontologies," in Marjanović-Dušanić, *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, 293–306. The work of Athanasios Markopoulos on history-writing in the Macedonian period is essential on this point. See: Athanasios Markopoulos, "Byzantine History Writing at the End of the First Millennium," in *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, ed. Paul Magdalino, ΜΜ 45 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 183–97; Athanasios Markopoulos, "From Narrative Historiography to Historical Biography. New Trends in Byzantine Historical Writing in the 10th–11th Centuries," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 102, no. 2 (2010): 697–715.

23   John Marincola, "Introduction," in Marincola, *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 4.

recent events refracted through the prism of deep history"?[24] The first point in the answer this study proposes for the *Chronographia* derives from the specific way in which the *Preface* defined its reader, within the context of explaining how to understand its authors and their text.

2   A Conceptual Map of the *Preface*

The entire *Preface* in both the Greek of K. de Boor's edition and in the English translation of C. Mango and R. Scott are provided in sections 3 and 4. An appendix at the end of this chapter provides, for comparison, the text of the *Preface* as found in *Wake Greek 5*, collated with its sister manuscript *VG 155* with previously unpublished details.[25] This brief epistle to the reader is a pro-grammatic address constructed carefully enough to merit close, even medi-tative reading. This is a piece of literature before it is a historical document, a short epistle less interested in conveying information than in conditioning readings.[26] The *Preface* carefully established an intricate relationship between three entities: author, text, and reader. The plot, or drama, of the *Preface* con-cerns the transmission of the role of author from one individual (George the Synkellos) to the next (Theophanes the Confessor). In this story of transmis-sion, the reader is twice carried through a definition of these three categories. The *Preface* first creates one set of definitions of this trifecta of author–text–reader for the first part of the text (George's *Chronography*). Due to George the

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24   Dimitris Krallis, "Imagining Rome in Medieval Constantinople: Memory, Politics, and the Past in the Middle Byzantine Period," in *How the Past Was Used: Historical Cultures, c. 750–2000*, ed. Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler, Proceedings of the British Academy 207 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 67. For an answer see: Dimitris Krallis, "Historiography as Political Debate," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 599–614.

25   *Wake Greek 5* was unknown to de Boor (though he did know of *VG 155*). Besides what I produce here, this important manuscript still has not been published in any form aside from N. Wilson's initial notes: Nigel G. Wilson, "A Manuscript of Theophanes in Oxford," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 357–60.

26   The *Preface* is the perfect length for a *lectio divina* meditation. Modern translations in their eloquence have unfortunately obscured the fact that most verbs and verbals in the *Preface* consist of a few quotidian Greek verbal roots. Making the *Preface* more prosaic in translation than in the original obscures the specific communicative act of the original verbal repetitiveness. Noticing its simple diction allows us—and I believe ninth-century readers too—to interpret its more ambiguous statements. Justin Lake, "Authorial Intention in Medieval Historiography," *History Compass* 12, no. 4 (2014): 344–60; Justin Lake, *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 17 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013).
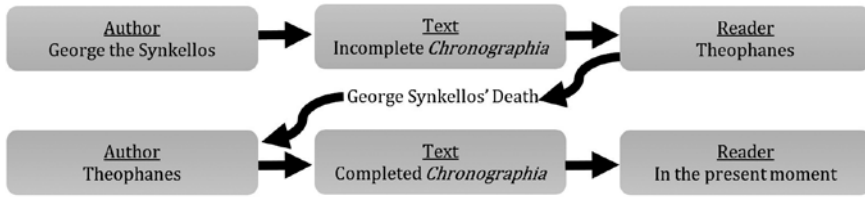
FIGURE 4.1   Narrative flow of the Preface of Theophanes
            IMAGE DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR

Synkellos' early death, this trifecta had to change: a new author was needed. Accordingly, the *Preface* goes on to create a second set of definitions of author, text, and reader for the second part of the work now in the reader's hands (George and Theophanes' *Chronicle*). With this duplication, the *Preface* used its definitions of author–text–reader for the *Chronography* to imply how to understand the definitions of author–text–reader for the *Chronicle*.

The ingenuity of the parallel structure comes to the fore in the transition necessitated by George the Synkellos' death. The *Preface* transformed the *persona* of Theophanes from being the reader to being the new author and a collaborator in the completion of the text. George placed such an obligation on Theophanes as the reader that he was forced to become the author. Theophanes was to feel this obligation as the reader of a text that needed completing, turning Theophanes into the same sort of authorial persona as George: an author who passes a text on to a reader obliged to not criticize what is missing from the text but to complete it.

The schema above depicts this shifting set of relations (figure 4.1). The black arrows follow the narrative of the *Preface* from the upper left to the bottom right in a "Z" pattern. The shaded blocks illustrate the parallelism in the *personae* of Author, Text, and Reader between the first and second halves of the *Preface*. The structural parallelism that I propose here is confirmed by complementary parallelism in subject matter, grammar, and diction. All of these enjoin the reader to read the *Preface* in the very specific way I have just described.

I justify these assertions in what follows by laying out the evidence for how the *Preface* indicates each of the two parallel sections of author—text—reader via grammatical and structural parallelism. I then explain how these features provided the reader with an injunction to read the text in a particular manner. When one reads the second of these author—text—reader trifectas in light of the first it is possible to find significance in the otherwise banal statements about the reader's present in which Theophanes has completed the *Chronographia* and that work is held as a codex in the reader's hands. Besides

providing evidence for how the work was read in its own era this approach reveals the *Preface* to be a unique window onto a ninth-century Byzantine conception of reading.[27]

3   George as Author and Theophanes as His Reader

George the Synkellos was not famous. So far as we know, no *Life* of George was ever written, and outside the *Chronographia* no historical trace of him exists. Instead, it would seem readers of the *Chronographia* knew George as the authorial persona created by the *Preface* itself. For this reason, the *Preface*'s initial sentences constructing George's authorial persona are likely more telling of how the work he produced was read than a reconstructed hypothetical biography.

Below is the text of the first half of the *Preface* in Greek and English translation followed by discussion and analysis; the second half is treated in the following section 4. The Greek is the normalized text of K. de Boor's critical edition. While that edition is our scholarly common ground, at the end of this chapter I have also provided an exact transcription from the earliest available recension—that of *Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155*—since de Boor did not know of the existence of *Wake Greek 5*. The English translation is a lightly modified version of that provided by C. Mango and R. Scott in their critical translation, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*. I have opted to largely reproduce that excellent translation (rather than to compose an alternative) as so much discussion of the *Preface* over the last decades has used it as a starting point and I do not want to muddy the waters of this chapter's argument by implying that my approach relies on a complete upending of Mango and Scott's understanding. My reading merely draws out certain features which are easily missed by readers who have not closely engaged with the Greek of the *Preface*.[28] This is accomplished with a few changes: to syntax (though odd in English, I placed

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27   It should be read in conjunction with the recent work of Derek Krueger to identify contemporary constructions of liturgical and penitential selves. Derek Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 98, and especially chapters 5–6. It is essential to realize the multitude of literary selves available (see p. 160).

28   My approach was prompted by the thoughtful comments of Juan Signes Codoñer in "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 170–72.

verbal phrases where they appear in the Greek, and restored the first-person plurals of the original); to diction (denoted by *italicized type*, I supply one English word for a few repeated key terms such as ἀκριβῶς and χρόνος); and to the key half-sentence (also marked with *italicized type*) on the passing of the *Chronographia* project from George to Theophanes. My new translation of that half-sentence is discussed at length in this section. For each of these changes I preserve Mango and Scott's original in the footnotes.

Ὁ μὲν μακαριώτατος ἀββᾶς Γεώργιος,	The most blessed Father George,
ὁ καὶ σύγκελλος γεγονὼς Ταρασίου τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως,	who had also been *synkellos* of Tarasios, the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople,
ἐλλόγιμος ἀνὴρ καὶ πολυμαθέστατος ὑπάρχων	a man of distinction and great learning,
πολλούς τε χρονογράφους καὶ ἱστοριογράφους	after he had perused many chronographers and
ἀναγνοὺς καὶ ἀκριβῶς τούτους διερευνησάμενος,	historians, and *exactingly* investigated them,[29]
σύντομον χρονογραφίαν ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ μέχρι Διοκλητιανοῦ, τοῦ βασιλέως Ῥωμαίων	a succinct chronography from Adam down to Diocletian, the Roman emperor
καὶ διώκτου τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο	who persecuted the Christians, he *exactingly* composed.[30]
τούς τε χρόνους ἐν πολλῇ ἐξετάσει ἀκριβολογησάμενος	He made a very exact study of the *times*[31]
καὶ τὰς τούτων διαφωνίας συμβιβάσας	reconciled their divergences,
καὶ ἐπιδιορθωσάμενος καὶ συστήσας	corrected them, and set them together
ὡς οὐδεὶς ἄλλος τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ,	in a manner surpassing all his predecessors.

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29   Mango and Scott: "… after he had perused and thoroughly investigated …"

30   Mango and Scott: "… composed with all accuracy."

31   As noted above, I have put the English "time(s)" for all instances of χρόνος/χρόνοι (*chronos*). Mango and Scott translate the term as both "date" and "year" which is entirely defensible: even readers without Greek will know that depending on context the term can be translated in various ways all indicating a chronologically defined period. Since, however, the term has direct bearing on what each *chrono-graphos* did in writing a *chrono-graphia*, for the present purpose I opted for a single English term to allow readers to track the term's repeated appearances.

τάς τε τῶν ἀρχαίων βασιλέων παντὸς
ἔθνους πολιτείας
τε καὶ τοὺς χρόνους ἀναγραψάμενος
καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν αὐτῷ
τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς τῶν μεγάλων καὶ
οἰκουμενικῶν θρόνων,
Ῥώμης τε, φημί, καὶ
Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ἀλεξανδρείας
τε καὶ Ἀντιοχείας καὶ Ἱεροσολύμων,
τούς τε ὀρθοδόξως τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
ποιμάναντας
καὶ τοὺς ἐν αἱρέσει λῃστρικῶς
ἄρξαντας
καὶ τοὺς τούτων χρόνους ἀκριβῶς
ἐνέταξεν.

The lives and *times* of the ancient kings
of every
nation he recorded
and, as far as he was able,
the bishops of the great ecumenical
sees,
I mean those of Rome, Constantinople,
Alexandria,
Antioch, and Jerusalem, both those
who had tended the Church in the right
faith
and those who, like robbers, had ruled
in heresy,
their times he also *exactingly* inserted.[32]

ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ τέλος τοῦ βίου τοῦτον
κατέλαβε καὶ
εἰς πέρας ἀγαγεῖν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ σκοπὸν
οὐκ ἴσχυσεν,
ἀλλά, καθὼς προέφημεν,

μέχρι Διοκλητιανοῦ συγγραψάμενος
τὸν τῇδε βίον κατέλιπε
καὶ πρὸς κύριον ἐξεδήμησεν
ἐν ὀρθοδόξῳ πίστει,
ἡμῖν, ὡς γνησίοις φίλοις,
τήν τε βίβλον ἣν συνέταξε
καταλέλοιπε
καὶ ἀφορμὰς παρέσχε
τὰ ἐλλείποντα ἀναπληρῶσαι.

Since, however, he was overtaken by the
end of
his life and was unable to bring his plan
to completion,
but, as we[33] have said, had carried his
composition
down to Diocletian
when he left this earthly life
and migrated to the Lord
(being in the orthodox faith),
to us, who were his close friends,
he both left behind the book he had
written,
and bequeathed the impetus
to complete what was missing.[34]

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32   Mango and Scott: "… and, as far as he was able, accurately inserted, with their dates, the
       bishops …"

33   Mango and Scott translate the *royal we* of the Greek into the more usual singular-I of
       English usage. I have re-inserted the *royal we* throughout to allow readers without Greek
       to note shifts from a singular to a plural first person.

34   On my justification for this alternate translation of these four lines see Section 1, above.

ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίαν οὐκ
ἀγνοοῦντες
καὶ τὸ στενὸν τοῦ λόγου
παρῃτούμεθα τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, ὡς
ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἐγχείρησιν οὖσαν.
αὐτὸς δὲ πολλὰ παρακαλέσας ἡμᾶς
μὴ ὀκνῆσαι καὶ ἀτέλεστον καταλιπεῖν
τὸ ἔργον ἐβιάσατο ἐπὶ τοῦτο ἐλθεῖν.

As for us—not being unaware of our lack of
learning and our limited culture
we declined to do this inasmuch as
the undertaking was above our powers.
He, however, begged us very much
not to shrink from it and leave the work
unfinished, and so forced us to take it in
hand.

3.1   *George's Authorial Persona and His Reliable Composition*

The first sentence of the *Preface* constructs the *persona* of George. It identifies George as a most blessed (monastic) father (ὁ μακαριώτατος ἀββᾶς) who held the office of *synkellos*. Chapter 2 reconstructed how ninth-century readers may have understood the office: one of the highest-ranking imperial officials whose task was to liaise between the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople. Introducing George as *synkellos* also underscores his association with the "most holy" patriarch Tarasios.[35] In this way George's *auctoritas* was initially connected to power and sanctity, to imperium and ecclesia.[36] The *Preface* then immediately combines this political and moral *auctoritas* with a scholarly *auctoritas* befitting the composition of the *Chronographia*: George was ἐλλόγιμος ("distinguished"; or, "eloquent") and πολυμαθέστατος ("greatly-learned").[37]

These descriptions of position and person are summed up in the adverb modifying George's composition: ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο. Note that the first two sentences of the *Preface* apply a form of the stem ἀκριβ- to George himself four times, including it in the opening and closing statements on the author and on his text. George's connection to power, his orthodoxy, and his learning made him ἀκριβής and his work an ἀκριβής composition. The nominal, adverbial, and prefix forms of ἀκρίβεια are translated by Mango and Scott with "accurate,"

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35   ὁ καὶ σύγκελλος Ταρασίου, τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. "… and the *synkellos* of Tarasios, the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople."

36   The Christian soundness of George's authorship is a priority in the *Preface*, the description of his death ending with an insistence on the rightness of his faith—πρὸς κύριον ἐξεδήμησεν ἐν ὀρθοδόξῳ πίστει ("he migrated up to the Lord in the orthodox faith").

37   In Lampe's dictionary of patristic-era Greek, ἐλλόγιμος is used to mean "eloquent" or "well-learned" in authors such as Menander Rhetor. Given what precedes (a statement of George's eminent credentials) and follows—that George prepared for writing by ἀναγνούς ("perusing" or "re-reading"), and by ἀκριβῶς διερευνησάμενος ("exactly investigating")—both senses of the term would seem to apply here.

"exact" or "thorough." In the translation above I used "exactingly" for consistency, but how does the *Chronographia* deploy this important concept?

Ἀκρίβεια appears a number of times in the *Chronographia*. As we have seen in his polemical statements against Eusebius, when George used this term he did not mean it literally as the exact calculation of dates.[38] In most instances where the word appears in the *Chronicle* it denotes a message—whether oral or written—that is "accurate" in the sense that it is a reliable or trustworthy statement, a truth.[39] Some of these instances fall at moments of crisis in military campaigns or battles for political control.[40] Other examples concern the reliable transmission of matters of belief in the sense of "exactly" following the orthodox faith defined by the universal episcopal councils.[41] The operative

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38   George used it to describe Julius Africanus' work even though he had pointed out that Africanus had made significant errors. There were other words available to indicate the sort of "exactness" that would mean George had tallied dates well, such as ἐξετάσει, used in the *Preface* with that very meaning. There is only one example in the *Chronographia* of ἀκρίβεια being used to merely indicate an accurate accounting of dates: MS 209 / dB 136.18.

39   In this way there is an echo of Thucydides in the *Preface*'s use of ἀκρίβεια. *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.22.1. Ed. Henry S. Jones and J. E. Powell, *Thucydidis historiae*, rev. ed., 2 vols., OCT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 1:20.18. However, well before the ninth century the concept of ἀκρίβεια had become associated specifically with moral action and "accurately" determining the orthodox faith. For comparable uses see Adam M. Schor, *Theodoret's People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria*, TCH 48 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 25–28.

40   Just before he was deposed by Herakleios, the emperor Phokas thwarted a budding conspiracy by having the conspirators interrogated. He was successful in ferreting them out because they were questioned with ἀκρίβεια. MS 426 / dB 297.29. In another instance, before Heraclius became emperor, he had been able to ἀκριβῶς discern those in his army who had joined a revolt against Maurice. MS 414 / dB 290.17. Similarly, during his touch-and-go campaigns against Chosroes, Herakleios relied on information from a spy which, because it was transmitted ἀκριβῶς (MS 437 / dB 305.16), could be relied upon. MS 466 / dB 335.19. Further similar examples: Herakleios learned about Chosroes' movements from "a Saracen" (MS 451 / dB 321.13), information that again proved ἀκριβής, or sound. In the only use of the verbal form of the concept (ἀκριβόω), Herakleios was able to *accurately inquire* about a specific time for action. Two additional later uses can be found in similar situations, discovering "in reliability" about an expedition undertaken against the empire (MS 534 / dB 384.3), and learning "reliably" about the Bulgarians' slaughter of 22,000 Arabs. MS 546 / dB 397.29.

41   Jovian requested that Athanasius of Alexandria, produce "an ἀκριβής (reliable/sound/trustworthy) account of the immaculate faith" as "an epistle of all orthodoxy." The concept of ἀκρίβεια is found twice under the reign of Constantine IV as an adjective describing the sixth ecumenical synod's doctrinal formulations. MS 500 / dB 360.5 and MS 504 / dB 361.21. That council is first ἀκριβής in terms of its orthodoxy, and *then* in terms of its historical context and date.

concept in other instances is reliable transmission, including the translation of theological content and doctrine into a way of life.[42] In the final half-century of the narrative, ἀκρίβεια indicates reliable transmission of the sort of knowledge that is hidden insight or discernment of the truth of a matter. In these instances of ἀκρίβεια, where knowledge is transmitted with increased stakes, the virtue of the transmitter guarantees the ἀκρίβεια of the account they transmit.[43] Only a select group understands what is *truly* going on, in contrast to the dominant narrative, or opinion of the majority.[44] The *Chronographia* thus used ἀκρίβεια to denote truths passed on truthfully: trustworthy content reliably transmitted even, or especially, when there were difficulties in making that transmission. Rather than "accurate" on the one hand, or "truthful" and "trustworthy" on the other, I have used "exacting" as an English translation of ἀκρίβεια to convey that the trustworthiness in question derives from a pointed message or meaning conveyed via a messenger of reliable character. The *Preface* defined George in terms of his orthodoxy and venerable learning, and his composition as *exacting* specifically in the sense of ordering the eras of rulers in a sound, reliable, or trustworthy manner.

The *Preface* constructed the *auctoritas* of George's persona from his intimate association with the most powerful ecclesiastical saint of recent memory (Tarasios), and from his moral and intellectual reliability (his ἀκρίβεια). This

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42 Two adjectival uses of ἀκρίβεια in the *Chronographia* support such a translation. The text describes the famous homilist, liturgist, and bishop John Chrysostom as achieving a synthesis between his words and his deeds as him being *true* (ἀκριβής) to every virtue: he practiced what he preached. MS 119/ dB 78.1. In a later passage on the breaking of Muawiyya's siege of Constantinople in AD 725/26, the chronicler opposes the emperor Leo III's claim that this victory was due to his piety and divine approval of his policy of iconoclasm. Instead, the *Chronographia* attributes salvation to the *truest* images (ἀκριβεστάτων ... χαρακτήρων) of the holy fathers that were still preserved in the City. MS 561 / dB 406.20. These both concern *true* or *sound* representation of holiness: virtue on earth, and images of holy saints in heaven.

43 The emperor Nikephoros I is accused of feigning great outrage while never intending to take any action. The *Chronographia* describes how some few who saw Nikephoros' deception perceived the farce, knowing truly (ἀκριβῶς) what the emperor was doing. MS 660 / dB 480.26. Perhaps the most enticing instance of ἀκρίβεια falls in one of the most well-known passages of the *Chronographia*, concerning the baptism of Constantine V—the "forerunner to the Antichrist." In this story, an infant Constantine was said to have defecated into the font at the moment of his immersion. The *Chronographia* asserts the accuracy of this story by emphasizing that the informants are *reliable* (ἀκριβής) observers. MS 552 / dB 400.10.

44 The last use of the term in the *Chronographia* indicates a moment of *aporia*: no one can *reliably* describe the death of the great enemy of all, Nikephoros I. MS 674 / dB 491.25.

reliability referred to George's studying,[45] his composition,[46] and his organization of materials.[47] By connecting George's *auctoritas* to his exacting (ἀκριβής) manner of study and composition, the *Preface* asserted the *Chronographia* did much more than correctly date events. Knowledge about the past was presumed difficult to obtain and synthesize, but the exceptional person of George had prepared a reliable transmission, an exacting account in the sense of being truthful and of offering insight that others might miss.

In explaining how George had insightfully, reliably, exactingly, and truthfully compiled a σύντομον χρονογραφίαν (a "succinct chronography"), the *Preface* notes a repeated object to which that activity was directed: τοὺς χρόνους.[48] George's exacting examinations of previous texts led to sound conclusions about the times of rulers: their dates in the sense of their eras or the period they had ruled. The *Preface* emphasizes that these eras were the primary accomplishment of George's work: George discerned the eras and reconciled their differences.[49] The eras which he reconciled were first those of kings, and secondly of the bishops of the patriarchal sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. In other words, George had established— exactingly—how to synchronize the reigns of kings and bishops with each other to determine the sequences and overlaps of these eras. George had put together a select chronography that exactingly ordered rulers' eras with each

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45 διερευνησάμενος or "thoroughly examining."

46 ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο. The verb συγγράφω translated as "compiling" or more generally "composing" is the standard, "classical" term for what an author of a "historical investigation" does—used by Thucydides in his own *Preface* to explain the argument of his composition. *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.1.1. Ed. Jones and Powell, *Thucydidis historiae*, 1:1.1. There is also an echo of Thucydides in the use of ἀκριβῶς for in his *History* (1.97.2) Thucydides had explained that he needed to explain something of Athenian expansion in the interval between the Persian War and the Peloponnesian War because the only author who touched upon it was Hellanicus who βραχέως τε καὶ τοῖς χρόνοις οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἐπεμνήσθη (recalled the period scarcely and unexactingly). Like my argument for how to understand ἀκριβῶς in the *Preface*, Thucydides is not critiquing specific errant or "inaccurate dates" in Hellanicus' account, but that his account is too superficial and not exacting in getting to the truth of the matter of Athenian expansion.

47 "ἀκριβο-λογησάμενος" (soundly-discerning), a thought completed with the finite verbal phrase: "ἀκριβῶς ἐνέταξεν" (soundly arranged).

48 George the Synkellos' composition of the *Chronography* meant he "ἐνέταξεν (ordered) ... τοὺς χρόνους (periods; *lit.* times)," while Theophanes "τετάχαμεν (ordered) ... ἑκάστου χρόνου τὰς πράξεις (the actions of each period / time)."

49 In doing so these sentences work with a chiastic structure (e.g., a-b-c-b-a). The repetition of the object creates this structure: τοὺς χρόνους (the ages) is repeated thrice: at beginning, middle, and end of the respective sentence.

other (ἐνέταξεν … τοὺς χρόνους). George established synchronizations between rulers of kingdoms and bishoprics, but he did not adjudicate these eras. In this stage of the project, whether the reigns of rulers and bishops were heretical or orthodox did not matter: they were functional lengths of time.

3.2 *George's Conversion of Theophanes from Reader to Author*

The last statements in the first part of the *Preface*, as above, deployed this account of author and composition to the relationship between author and reader. George came to the end of his life before he was able to bring his plan or goal (σκοπός) to its end (πέρας). George thus bequeathed the *Chronography* in an incomplete state. George left the project to his reader Theophanes in two ways. He left behind the physical codex (βίβλον) in which he had organized (συνέταξεν) the eras of the rulers. He also bequeathed the impetus (ἀφορμάς) or idea to complete what remained. Having made these bequests, the *Preface* then explained that George needed to deploy the moral authority of a dying man to bring Theophanes into collaboration, even though Theophanes is portrayed as someone who would benefit from reading George's authoritative work, more than one who should be co-authoring it.

Theophanes claims that George's request was beyond our craft (ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἐγχείρησιν). His pleas to avoid the obligation rely on the only thing he really does know well: he was not unlearned in his own lack of knowledge (τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίαν οὐκ ἀγνοοῦντες), a lovely pun in a double negative construction. Nevertheless, despite the limit of Theophanes' knowledge (τὸ στενὸν τοῦ λόγου), George took up the role of supplicant (πολλὰ παρακαλέσας ἡμᾶς) to force the issue. Theophanes was obliged to accept (ἐλθεῖν) the task of filling in what was missing (ἀναπληρῶσαι), to the degree that he promised he would not himself leave behind what was still left (καταλιπεῖν … τὰ ἐλλείποντα). Note here that the *Preface* uses the same verb (καταλείπω) for George's leaving behind the book he had written as to note that Theophanes must not leave this task (τὸ ἔργον) behind but complete it.

It was George's bequeathal of the impetus (ἀφορμαί) which converted Theophanes from reader to author by giving him a specific task. George's multi-faceted *auctoritas* had backed his new writing of time's eras. That task was indeed beyond Theophanes' abilities. But as we will see in the next section, the *Preface* would expand on Theophanes' new role as collaborative author to mean his agreement to supply specific aspects of the project. Theophanes was not asked to fulfill the chronographer's authoritative praxis—to author time itself, to create historical eras in the model of George the Synkellos himself—but the new author was simply to fill out the content of those eras.

4   Theophanes, Author of "the Same Chronography," and His Reader

The second half of the *Preface*, which describes Theophanes' work to complete
George's *Chronographia*, is often cited as an exemplar of what is known as
the *humility* or *modesty topos* of this literary milieu.[50] While the text's use of
self-abasement in its framing of Theophanes is undeniable, my interest is to
identify the rhetorical purpose for adopting authorial modesty. In what follows
I argue that the *Preface* uses the specific persona it constructs for Theophanes
to accomplish two things in its closing, discussed in each of the subsec-
tions below. First, the contrast between the erudite George and the igno-
rant Theophanes facilitates the *Preface*'s insistence that George established
the work such that Theophanes in no way diminished its quality and that
the resultant project remained at an "exacting" level. Second, the closing of the
Preface adds an implication to this argument: a critical reader should not judge
the work but pity Theophanes in his humility and correct any omissions the
present reader might identify. In other words, the *Preface* closes by placing the
exact same obligation on the present reader as was placed on Theophanes by
George himself. In this analysis the portrait of Theophanes establishes a par-
ticipatory practice of reading: each successive reader is responsible for main-
taining the reliability of this exactingly composed work, and is invited to read
so carefully as to derive a present benefit from George's ordering of time and
Theophanes' categorizing of deeds.

   Below is the text of the second half of the *Preface*. As noted in Section 3, the
Greek is that of K. de Boor's critical edition. For comparison a transcription of
the text as it appears in the manuscript *Wake Greek 5* (unknown to de Boor)
is provided as an appendix to the present chapter. The translation here is (as
above) that of C. Mango and R. Scott. I have made the same slight modifica-
tions noted above, replaced "chronicle" with "chronography," and used a single
translation for the repeated phrase κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ("to the best of our
ability") in order to make its repetition explicit for my readers. My changes are
noted with *italic* script.

διὸ καὶ ἀναγκασθέντες διὰ τὴν τούτου ὑπακοήν,	Being thus constrained by obedience to him,
εἰς τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ἐγχειρήσαντες	to undertake a task above our powers,

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50   Alexander Kazhdan, *A History of Byzantine Literature: 650–850*, ed. Christine Angelidi,
        Research Series 4 (Athens: The National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for
        Byzantine Research, 2006), 219–24.

κόπον οὐ τὸν τυχόντα κατεβαλόμεθα.

πολλὰς γὰρ βίβλους καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐκζη-
τήσαντες κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν καὶ
ἐρευνήσαντες
τόδε τὸ χρονογραφεῖον ἀπὸ Διοκλητιανοῦ
μέχρι τῆς βασιλείας Μιχαὴλ καὶ
Θεοφυλάκτου, τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ,
τάς τε βασιλείας καὶ τοὺς πατριάρχας
καὶ τὰς τούτων πράξεις σὺν τοῖς χρόνοις

κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἀκριβῶς
συνεγραψάμεθα,

οὐδὲν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῶν συντάξαντες,

ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἱστοριογράφων

τε καὶ λογογράφων ἀναλεξάμενοι
ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις τόποις τετάχαμεν

ἑκάστου χρόνου τὰς πράξεις,
ἀσυγχύτως κατατάττοντες
ἵνα εἰδέναι ἔχωσιν οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες

ἐν ποίῳ χρόνῳ ἑκάστου βασιλέως
ποία πρᾶξις γέγονεν,
εἴτε πολεμική, εἴτε ἐκκλησιαστική,
εἴτε πολιτική, εἴτε δημώδης, εἴτε τις
ἑτέρα.

οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλειαν, ὡς οἶμαι,

καρποῦται τῶν ἀρχαίων τὰς πράξεις
ἀναγινώσκων.

we expended an uncommon amount
of labour,

for we, too, after seeking out—to the
best of our ability—and examining
many books,
this *chronography*[51] from Diocletian
down to the reign of Michael and his
son Theophylact,
namely the reigns and the patriarchs,
and their deeds together with their
times, we

—*to the best of our ability*—wrote
down *exactingly*.[52]

We did not set down anything of our
own composition

but have made a selection from the
ancient historians

and prose-writers,
and have consigned to their proper
places

the events of each *time*;
arranged without confusion.
In this manner the readers may be
able to know

in which *time* of each emperor
what event took place
be it military or ecclesiastical,
or civic or popular, or of any other
kind;

for I believe that one who reads the
actions of the
ancients derives no small benefit
from so doing.

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51   Mango and Scott: "chronicle."
52   Mango and Scott: "... have written down accurately—as best I could—this chronicle."

εἴ τις δέ τι ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ὁ πονήματι ἡμῶν	May anyone who finds in this our work
ὀνησιφόρον εὕροι,	anything of value
τὴν πρέπουσαν τῷ θεῷ εὐχαριστίαν ἀποδώσῃ	give proper thanks to God
καὶ ἡμῖν τοῖς ἀμαθέσι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς	and, for the sake of the Lord,
διὰ τὸν κύριον ὑπερεύξηται	pray on behalf of us who are uneducated and sinful;
καὶ εἴ τι ἐλλεῖπον εὕροι,	and if he finds aught that is wanting,
τῇ ἀμαθίᾳ ἡμῶν τοῦτο λογίσηται	may he ascribe it to our ignorance
καὶ τῇ ἀργίᾳ τοῦ χαμερποῦς νοὸς ἡμῶν	and the idleness of our grovelling mind,
καὶ συγγνώσεται ἡμῖν διὰ τὸν κύριον.	and forgive us for the sake of the Lord;
φίλον γὰρ θεῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν.	for God is pleased when one has done *to the best of one's ability*.[53]

4.1   *Theophanes as Author*

George the Synkellos, for all his *auctoritas*, needed the help of the humble Theophanes to complete his *Chronographia* project. The second half of the *Preface* turns this potential problem into a theory of reading. The *Preface* accomplishes this by defining Theophanes' authorial persona within an explanation of how an incredibly venerable and learned initial author could pass an incomplete work to one of much lesser *auctoritas*, and yet still have the result be a work of ἀκρίβεια. The *Preface* does distinguish Theophanes' work from George's and does mark his work as appropriate to a more humble ability, but

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53   Mango and Scott: "… when one has done one's best." This is surely the most idiomatic way to render the phrase into English; however, I want to ensure that my anglophone readers are able to identify the similarity between this final idiomatic phrase (φίλον γὰρ θεῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν) and the phrase that had previously emphasized Theophanes' own efforts (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν). Compare a parallel passage in the oeuvre of John of Damascus (also known to have effectively utilized the so-called *modesty topos*). The Damascene's use of the phrase also occurs in a preface, and even more explicitly evokes a sympathetic reader: "And God is pleased when one offers, according to one's ability, out of desire and zeal and a good intention" (Ἐπειδὴ δὲ φίλον θεῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐκ πόθου καὶ ζήλου καὶ ἀγαθῆς προσφερόμενον προαιρέσεως). *Oratio Secunda in formitionen sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae* sec. 1. Ed Bonifatius Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 5, *Opera homiletica et hagiographica*, PTS 29 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 516.

it does so with a double meaning. The descriptions of Theophanes' contributions are given in sentences whose syntax and diction parallel the descriptions of George's work as author that we considered above. These linguistic parallels distinguish Theophanes' humble contributions from George's venerability and efforts in specific ways, even as the parallelism ties their respective efforts more closely together.[54]

When the *Preface* described George the Synkellos' ordering the ages or eras of rulers it stated that he did so brilliantly: "as no other before him" (ὡς οὐδεὶς ἄλλος τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ). By contrast, the description of Theophanes insisted that he was undertaking a task above his powers (εἰς τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ἐγχειρήσαντες) and so needed to expend an uncommon amount of labor (κόπον οὐ τὸν τυχόντα κατεβαλόμεθα). Where George's distinction and great learning (ἐλλόγιμος ἀνὴρ καὶ πολυμαθέστατος) allowed him to study and then write "exactingly" (ἀκριβῶς), Theophanes offered hard work—"to the best of our ability" (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν). In these ways the *Preface* contrasts the two authors' different states by using characteristic adverbs to characterize the activities of each. As we saw in the previous section, George "studied and examined books exactingly" (ἀναγνοὺς ... ἀκριβῶς διερευνησάμενος) and then "composed the succinct chronography exactingly" (σύντομον χρονογραφίαν ... ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο). Here, when Theophanes prepared to write the same *Chronographia* (τόδε τὸ χρονογραφεῖον ... συνεγραψάμεθα), "he sought out and examined books according to his ability" (ἐκζητήσαντες ... κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἐρευνήσαντες).[55] George's working "exactingly" (ἀκριβῶς) gave the work its "exacting" (ἀκριβής) quality. But Theophanes' working according to his ability did not reduce the quality of the work to the level of his abilities alone. Rather, an easily missed line applies both abilities to the composition of the complete, co-authored *Chronographia*: it was "exactingly composed to the best of our abilities" (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν

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54   The *Preface* uses the same verbs of composition for both George and Theophanes, and the objects of their composition are also the same: George compiled the σύντομον χρονογραφίαν (the 'Abbreviated *Chronography*') and Theophanes compiled τόδε τὸ χρονογραφεῖον (this very *Chronography*). Even the structure of the phrase describing the historical periods covered by each author is the same. George's *Chronography* proceeded ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ *μέχρι* Διοκλητιανοῦ ("*from* Adam *up to* Diocletian"), and Theophanes' *Chronography* ἀπὸ Διοκλητιανοῦ *μέχρι* τῆς βασιλείας Μιχαὴλ καὶ Θεοφυλάκτου ("*from* Diocletian *up to* the reign of Michael and Theophylact"). Emphasis mine.

55   Note that this combination of "discovering" and "according to ability" also sets up the last phrase of the *Preface*.

ἀκριβῶς συνεγραψάμεθα).[56] The adverbials characterizing each author are deployed jointly to convey their joint authorship.[57]

Theophanes' working at the level of his ability turns out to not have reduced the quality of the *Chronographia* because of the specific contributions he made. The exact contributions the authors made are denoted by affixing different prefixes to a single common verb of composition: τάσσω (an extremely common verb frequently prefixed to indicate a variety of concepts of ordering and organization). The first part of the *Preface* described George's creation of historical eras through chronological synchronizations of secular rulers and of bishops: George registered (ἐν-τάσσω) these eras exactingly (ἀκριβῶς ἐνέταξεν). In our present section of the *Preface* the same verbal stem was used first to distinguish Theophanes' work from George's: Theophanes did none of the innovative organization (συν-τάσσω) of historical time that George had (οὐδὲν ἀφ᾽ ἑαυτῶν συντάξαντες). Instead, already provided with these times or eras, Theophanes ordered the *sorts* of things each ruler did—their deeds—*into* each of George's historical periods (ἐν τοῖς ἰδίοις τόποις τετάχαμεν ἑκάστου χρόνου τὰς πράξεις). The *Preface* concludes the idea with yet another form of the same verb, explaining that in this Theophanes had classified (κατα-τάσσω) these different types of deeds without mix-up (ἀσυγχύτως κατατάττοντες).

Significantly, Theophanes' classifications had an impact upon the way the text could be read. In creating eras for rulers, George did not distinguish between heretical and orthodox rulers. George's work was to compose time: each ruler's reign was treated in the same way, as a period or era. Where this meant George distinguished the reigns of five different patriarchal sees from each other, Theophanes on the other hand divided the deeds of both kings and ecclesiastical rulers into five different sorts: military, ecclesiastical, civic, social, and other. This point is made grammatically through parallelism between the first and second part of the *Preface*: "and" conjunctions join the five patriarchal

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56   George's actions are described with a form of "exactness" (ἀκρίβεια) four times. The adverbial phrase used to characterize Theophanes' work comes in some of the same structures in which "exactly" (ἀκριβῶς) characterizes George's work. Theophanes' work is twice "to the best of our ability" (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν), and his contribution is then also glossed with phrases that refer to his work in a self-effacing manner such as "not a small benefit" (οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλειαν).

57   When the *Preface* describes the text that each author contributed to, it emphasizes the identity of action and object. The *Chronography* in both its incomplete (under George) and completed (under Theophanes) forms is "reliably compiled" (ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο/-άμεθα) and then "arranged" (ἐνέταξεν / τετάχαμεν). I have already mentioned in note 46 that this "compiling" or "composing" is the traditional term for what an author of a "historical investigation" does—used by Thucydides in his own *Preface* to explain the argument of his composition.

bishops whom George inclusively synchronized whereas "either" conjunctions join the list of Theophanes' five categories of deeds.

Theophanes' ordering did not rise to George's level of learning and authority, but his work had a benefit for the reader that George's lacked: by making distinctions between the kinds of deeds of each ruler, Theophanes' work facilitated interpretation. George had set up a reliable or exacting historical time, laying out eras by the length of reigns of rulers of various kingdoms, and then establishing synchronizations between those reigns. Theophanes could never have done what George did: he relied on the order of time established through the exacting work of his most blessed and learned master. Nevertheless, George's chronographical *auctoritas* did not equip his reader to interpret. Theophanes in his humility had been the one who made it possible to find meaning. The *Preface* states this explicitly: Theophanes' ordering was for the purpose of equipping readers to know what kind of action was done in which kind of an emperor's era (ἵνα εἰδέναι ἔχωσιν οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες ἐν ποίῳ χρόνῳ ἑκάστου βασιλέως ποία πρᾶξις γέγονεν).[58] Readers are invited to judge rulers by looking at the sorts of deeds Theophanes had recorded and how he had ordered them, permitting a present reader to understand the import of when deeds occurred and in doing so to reap no small benefit (οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλειαν ... καρποῦται).[59]

4.2 *Theophanes' Own Need for His Reader*
The *Preface*'s closing deploys the rhetoric and parallelism noted above to remake the present reader into the image of Theophanes. With an imperative appeal to participate and join in the fulfillment of George's impetus, the reader was enjoined to complete what they might discover to be missing, no matter how humble their own *auctoritas*. George had compelled (ἀναγκάζω) Theophanes to complete what [pl.] was missing (ἀναπληρῶσαι τὰ ἐλλείποντα).

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58 I would translate the genitive phrase between the prepositional and accusative phrases ἑκάστου βασιλέως ("of each emperor") as distributive with both adjacent phrases. Grammar does not demand one reading over the other, and it is a fact that both "the times" and "the actions" under consideration here are "of emperors".

59 Note that the contrast between the two chiastic center points changes from being a contrast in ability to a contrast in purpose. George's "exacting" work was an end that justified itself: the goal of ordering the eras exactly was to have exactly ordered, reliable eras. Though stated to be "above our powers," the goal of Theophanes discerning the sort of action that belonged to each ruler of each era was to make the reader aware of these types, and so able to "reap a benefit" from this discernment. The benefit of Theophanes' work required his reader's discernment. Both authors ordered something, but George's ordering of time permitted Theophanes' ordering of deeds, which in turn permitted the present reader to "reap no small benefit".

The *Preface* itself then placed the same responsibility on the present reader, "who may discover something [sg.] missing" (τι ἐλλεῖπον εὕροι). Through such structural cues as I have outlined thus far the *Preface* not only wove together George's persona with Theophanes' as first reader and then co-author but braided the *Preface*'s own present reader into the dynamic relationship between George and his own chronography, and Theophanes and their shared chronography.

The *Preface* did this by associating each reader with an obligation to the persona from whom he received the text. George's bequeathal to Theophanes consisted of a book and an impetus (or idea), and conveyed two obligations: to accept what he had written, and to complete the work according to his vision. The *Preface* used this same structure to bring Theophanes' work to his own reader by offering a coupled pair of obligations in future subjunctives. This shift in tense makes these statements present, rather than historical: demands upon the reader while the reader is reading *right now*. That is, the *Preface* imagines readers might find two sorts of things in Theophanes' additions to the project. First, a reader might discover something of use (τι ... ὀνησιφόρον εὕροι). In this case the reader is to offer a liturgical thanksgiving (τὴν πρέπουσαν τῷ θεῷ εὐχαριστίαν ἀποδώσῃ) and to pray for Theophanes, unlearned and a sinner (ἡμῖν τοῖς ἀμαθέσι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς διὰ τὸν κύριον ὑπερεύξηται). Second, the present reader might also discover something missing (εὕροι ... τι ἐλλεῖπον), even though George and Theophanes had so exactingly ordered the times, and so carefully sought out passages (διερευνησάμενος and ἐρευνήσαντες). Should the reader do so, they are placed under a two-fold obligation. They must not blame Theophanes but attribute (λογίσηται) the failure "to our ignorance and to the idleness of our grovelling mind" (τῇ ἀμαθίᾳ ἡμῶν ... καὶ τῇ ἀργίᾳ τοῦ χαμερποῦς νοὸς ἡμῶν). The *Preface* then makes a most interesting final bequest: the reader must forgive us (συγγνώσεται ἡμῖν). Since the reader had already been asked to pray on behalf of Theophanes (ὑπερεύξηται) due to his failures, it is worth specifying what is the idea of forgiveness here. The verb συγγιγνώσκω is a prefixed form of the verb for "coming-to-know" (γιγνώσκω); the prefixed form generates the meaning of "forgiveness" in the rich sense of coming to an active shared understanding, a unity or joining of minds. The reader is enjoined to not simply forgive Theophanes in the sense of pitying him, but—given the context of the reader discovering something missing in the text—in the sense of joining *with* Theophanes to complete the task undertaken for God's sake (διὰ τὸν κύριον).

The final idiom completes this point: φίλον γὰρ θεῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν. C. Mango and R. Scott's translation renders the phrase: "God is pleased

when one has done one's best."[60] While certainly idiomatic, this translation obscures an explicit allusion in the original: the final phrase (τὸ κατὰ δύνα-μιν) clearly evokes the phrase consistently used to characterize Theophanes' work (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν). The result is that the subject of this final phrase is both Theophanes and the present reader. The present reader should "forgive" Theophanes through recognizing his intention to have done his best.[61] But the present reader is also put in the position of asking whether they have done their own best with what they have found missing. If we keep the present reader in mind while reading συγγνώσεται ἡμῖν διὰ τὸν κύριον φίλον γὰρ θεῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν ("and forgive me for the sake of the Lord for God is pleased when one has done *to the best of one's ability*"), the sentence gently but firmly enjoins the reader to come together with Theophanes' efforts in the exact way Theophanes had joined George's own. Just as Theophanes had joined with George "as a close friend" (ὡς γνησίοις φίλοις), the reader who contributed their own efforts (τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν) would be "a friend to God" (φίλον θεῷ).

Through the phrase that defined Theophanes' efforts as limited by his (humble) ability, the *Preface* initially utilized modesty to make a plea to the reader's mercy and prayers. Then in closing it made a rhetorical U-turn and insisted that God was in fact fully pleased with Theophanes' efforts, lifting the phrase κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν from Theophanes' shoulders and placing it as an obligation upon his own reader, effectively fashioning the present reader into a new Theophanes. The humility of the *persona* of Theophanes was thus not mere self-effacement but served to cut off any attempt by the present reader to recuse themselves from the work of joining with George and Theophanes: God is pleased with one who does their best; or, he who tries is friend to God. Theophanes joined George as a collaborator according to his ability (κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν) though it was beyond his craft (ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἐγχείρησιν). The imperative to the reader thus amounts to: Whatever you find that is lacking, use it to join in our efforts, as I did (or would you condemn me in my self-abasement?). The *Preface* made the act of reading critically into an obligation to turn those same critical observations into fruitful interpretations, if not

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60   C. Mango and R. Scott support their translation by noting a use of the phrase by the fourth-century bishop Gregory Nazianzos. *Oratio in laudem Caesarii* 17 (*PG* 35, 776B), and *Oratio in laudem Basilii* 82 (*PG* 36, 604D). In support of this, I would add that there is also some resemblance to Ignatios Diakonos, *Vita Nikephori*. Ed. Karl de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* [Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1880], 140.15–16.

61   It is ambiguous whether Theophanes is abject and entirely dependent upon the reader to beseech God and make things right before the divine throne, or if God is *already* pleased, for Theophanes *has* done his best.

direct contributions. Theophanes' famous humility is significant not so much for what it says about his historic person but for the terms it sets for the act of reading the *Chronographia*.

5　　The Invitation of the *Preface*

The theory of reading established by the *Preface* is highly developed, articulate, and charged. It attunes us to the level of close, careful, even meditative reading that a ninth-century Constantinopolitan author could expect from an educated audience. The idea of reading uncovered here in the *Preface* is unique among early medieval chronicles for the complexity of its theorization of author—text—reader and for the way it used multiple authorial *personae* in a narrative that shifted the impetus for creation from original author to present reader. Theophanes' self-humiliation served a brilliant dual purpose in crafting a very specific relationship between his text and its reader. Humility was the reason the reader must excuse Theophanes for any omissions. It was also the means of obliging the reader to not only pray for Theophanes—ignorant and sinful as he was—but to correct and complete what was missing. No reader could lower themselves further than Theophanes' self-abasement; the more attentive, critical, and informed a reader was, the more they would be obliged to read the *Chronographia* as a new co-author. This was how the *Preface* turned the present reader's mere act of reading into an obligation to contribute themselves.

　　Such rhetoric is exciting to identify but not unexpected; it is in line with noted middle-Byzantine literary practices where complex and self-aware formulations are not uncommon.[62] Authors were conceived of as authors by being situated in relationship to those who have come before and those who will come after. For instance, S. Papaioannou has explained that in the self-representations to be found in Gregory of Nazianzus' orations their *rhetoricality* or *literariness* must be emphasized. Gregory's literary self is not isolated but situated within a "network of relations" which links an author "and his audience … as well as his readers … in mutual exchanges of symbolic and cultural capital."[63] In exactly this way, the unique authorial persona, thesis, and

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62　Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects*.

63　Stratis Papaioannou, "Byzantium and the Modernist Subject: The Case of Autobiographical Literature," in *Byzantium/Modernism: The Byzantine as Method in Modernity*, ed. Roland Betancourt and Maria Taroutina, Visualising the Middle Ages 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 209.

readerly persona of the *Chronographia* created a particularly charged environment for anyone poring over this account of all time and history. In our study of the First-Created Day thesis, we saw the *Chronographia* propose to the reader that—as an orthodox Christian participating in the very presence of the divine—they had unique insight into not only calculating the times and seasons but into perceiving the meaning of events of the present age and the present day through historical typologies. That First-Created Day thesis together with the idea of the reader here in the *Preface* alerts us to what a skillful work of rhetoric the *Chronographia* is.

The summative theory of reading we have adduced from the *Chronographia* asserted that through a shared divine grace readers could see what was not immediately apparent. It bequeathed to readers an obligation to join with past recipients of grace and participate in the final completion of the text. It gave readers agency, their insights significance, and made their act of reading an explicit invitation to notice whatever might be missing therein, and to derive a present benefit from the text. This chronography was not for passive consumption: its readers were invited to make meaning out of the work by contributing to the project. How, exactly, did the *Chronographia* conceive of this contribution? Chapter 3 began to answer that question, offering that the First-Created Day's idea of presence in past historical moments meant the reader could have participatory experience of past events even as they were experiencing the future present. What sort of thing might such a reader have been able to supply? Were they to enter missing data? Dates? Events? This is not yet entirely clear. What we have found is that the reader of the *Chronographia* was invited, even obligated to participate and collaborate to bring the First-Created Day into the present. Our reading of the *Preface* has clarified that this participation was an invitation to the reader to read the *Chronographia* in expectation of discovering the sort of time each period of the past had been, and the sort of time in which they were now living.

Appendix: Preface of Theophanes as in Wake Greek 5, Collated with VG 155

The recension of the *Preface* in *Wake Greek 5* (ff. 61v–62r) and its sister manuscript *VG 155* (ff. 64r–65r) is of particular value. The *Preface* in the other surviving ninth-century manuscript, *PG 1710*, is missing the first half (incipit: καταλέλοιπεν καὶ ἀφορμᾶς) and the relevant leaf (f. 2) is damaged resulting in several lacunae. Furthermore, *Wake Greek 5* was unknown to de Boor and so has yet to be incorporated into the critical apparatus (whereas *VG 155* was known to him and so was incorporated into the critical edition).

I have taken the unusual approach of transcribing the original spelling, punctuation, and accentuation of *Wake Greek 5* exactly (in these *VG 155* is very nearly, though not exactly, the same) rather than normalizing to modern scholarly conventions. Why not? This is the form in which the *Preface* was read by the ninth-century readers in whom I am interested. There are two textual discrepancies between these sister manuscripts, both noted in the footnotes. I have used a paragraph division to indicate where *Wake Greek 5* splits the *Preface* into two with a *littera notabilior*. The final punctuation is also a transcription. For my reader's convenience I have spelled out abbreviations, abbreviated endings, and *nomina sacra* in square brackets.

Ὁ μὲν μακαριώτατος ἀββᾶς Γεώργιος, ὁ καὶ σύγκελλος γεγονὼς Ταρασίου τοῦ ἁγιωτάτου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ἐλλόγιμος ἀνὴρ καὶ πολυμαθέστατος ὑπάρχων· πολλούς τε χρονογράφους· καὶ ἱστοριογράφους ἀναγνοὺς κ[αὶ] ἀκριβῶς τούτους διερευνησάμενος· σύντομον χρονογραφίαν ἀπὸ ἀδάμ· μέχρι διοκλητιανοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως ῥωμαίων·[64] καὶ διώκτου τῶν χριστιανῶν· ἀκριβῶς συνεγράψατο· τούς τε χρόνους ἐν πολλῇ ἐξ ἐτάσει ἀκριβολογησάμενος· καὶ τὰς τούτων διαφωνίας συμβιβάσας· καὶ ἐπιδιορθωσάμενος· καὶ συστήσας· ὡς οὐδεὶς ἄλλος τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ· τάς τε τῶν ἀρχαίων βασιλέων· παντὸς ἔθνους· πολιτείας τε καὶ τοὺς χρόνους ἀναγραψάμενος· καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν αὐτὸ τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς· τῶν μεγάλων καὶ οἰκουμενικῶν θρόνων· ῥώμης τε φημὶ καὶ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως· ἀλεξανδρείας τε καὶ ἀντιοχείας· καὶ ἵεροσολύμων, τούς τε ὀρθοδόξως τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ποιμάναντας· κ[αὶ] τοὺς ἐν αἱρέσει ληστρικῶς ἄρξαντας· καὶ τοὺς τούτων χρόνους ἀκριβῶς ἐνέταξε[ν]·

Ἐπεὶ δὲ, τὸ τέλος τοῦ βίου τοῦτον κατέλαβεν, καὶ εἰς πέρας ἀγαγεῖν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ σκοπὸν οὐκ' ἴσχυσεν· ἀλλὰ καθὼς προέφημεν· μέχρι διοκλητιανοῦ συγγραψάμενος· τὸν τῇδε βίον κατέλιπεν· καὶ πρὸς κ[ύριο]ν ἐξεδήμησεν· ἐν ὀρθοδόξῳ πίστει· ἡμῖν ὡς γνησίοις φίλοις· τήν τε βίβλον ἣν συνέταξεν καταλέλοιπεν· καὶ ἀφορμὰς παρ' ἔσχεν τὰ ἐλλείποντα ἀναπληρῶσαι· ἡμεῖς δὲ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀμαθίαν οὐκ ἀγνοοῦντες· καὶ τὸ στενὸν τοῦ λόγου παρητούμεθα τοῦτο ποιῆσαι· ὡς ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἐγχείρησιν οὖσαν· αὐτὸς δὲ πολλὰ παρακαλέσας ἡμᾶς μὴ ὀκνῆσαι· καὶ ἀτέλεστον καταλιπεῖν τὸ ἔργον· ἐβιάσατο ἐπὶ τούτῳ ἐλθεῖν. δι' ὃ καὶ ἀναγκασθέντες· διὰ τὴν τούτου ὑπακοήν· εἰς τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς ἐγχειρήσαντες· κόπον οὐ τὸν τυχόντα κατεβαλόμεθα· πολλὰς γὰρ βίβλους [καὶ] ἡμεῖς ἐκζητήσαντες· κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐρευνήσαντες· τόδε τὸ χρονογράφιον ἀπὸ διοκλητιανοῦ· μέχρι τῆς βασιλείας μιχαηλ· καὶ θεοφυλάκτου τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ· τάς τε βασιλείας· καὶ τοὺς πατριάρχας· καὶ τὰς τούτων πράξεις συν τοῖς χρόνοις· κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἡμῖν ἀκριβῶς[65] συνεγραψάμεθα· οὐδὲν ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν συντάξαντες· ἀλλὰ ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων ἵστοριογράφων τε καὶ λογογράφων· ἀναλεξάμενοι· ἐν τοῖς ἵδίοις τόποις τετάχαμεν· ἑκάστου χρόνου τὰς πράξεις· ἀσυγχύτως κατατάττοντες· ἵνα εἰδέναι ἔχωσιν οἱ ἀναγινώσκοντες· ἐν ποίῳ χρόνῳ· ἑκάστου βασιλέως· ποία πράξεις γέγονεν· εἴτε πολεμικὴ· εἴτε

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64   ῥωμαίων in *VG 155* but not in *Wake Greek 5*.

65   ἀκριβῶς in *VG 155* but not in *Wake Greek 5*.

ἐκκλησιαστικὴ· εἴτε πολιτικὴ· εἴτε δημώδης· εἴτε τις ἑτέρα· οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλειαν· ὡς οἶμαι
καρποῦται· ὁ τῶν ἀρχαίων τὰς πράξεις ἀναγινώσκων· εἴ τις δέ τι ἐν τούτῳ τῷ πονήματι ἡμῶν
ὀνησιφόρον εὕροι· τὴν πρέπουσαν τῷ θ[ε]ῷ· εὐχαριστίαν ἀποδώσῃ· καὶ ἡμῖν τοῖς ἀμαθέσι καὶ
ἁμαρτωλοῖς· διὰ τὸν κ[ύριο]ν ὑπερεύξηται· καὶ εἴ τι ἐλλεῖπον εὕροι τῇ ἀμαθίᾳ ἡμῶν· τοῦτο
λογίσηται· καὶ τῇ ἀργίᾳ τοῦ χαμερποῦς νοὸς ἡμῶν· καὶ συγγνώσεται ἡμῖν διὰ τὸν κ[ύριο]ν·
φίλον γὰρ θ[ε]ῷ τὸ κατὰ δύναμιν: ~

The Imperial Types of the Chronicle

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Imperial Antitypes: Progenitors, Successors, and Greed

We have already seen that the *Chronographia* project as a whole was structured to frame the present age as fulfilling the types of the past: in the typological thinking that characterized the First-Created Day thesis, the Incarnation fulfilled the Creation. The second part of the *Chronographia*, the *Chronicle*, was an account of the present age as defined by the Roman Empire coming to rule over Judea. The *Chronicle*'s account of the present era explicitly sought to provide its reader with "some practical benefit." In this chapter I argue that the *Chronicle* did this through the same typological reasoning as we have seen in the First-Created Day thesis. The *Chronicle* invited readers to make sense of the empire and the eras of its emperors by reading the narratives of individual emperors as imperial types. It arranged the reigns of the Roman emperors as set pieces so that earlier emperors could be read as types fulfilled in the reigns of later emperors. In these typologies the present always fulfills or completes the type established by the past, but fulfillment does not necessarily mean improvement: the present supersedes the past whether the type is positive or negative. In this way the *Chronicle* used typologies to present its readers with a carefully composed *Kaiserkritik*.

The way the *Chronicle* set itself up to be read as a typological *Kaiserkritik* is distinctive, but that it did so should not be surprising. Medieval chronicles and histories were often set up as mirrors for princes with criticism of past rulers and advice for contemporary rulers (whether implied or explicit).[1]

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1 The bibliography on this subject is immense. For some starting points, see a Byzantine example in: Juan Signes Codoñer, "Kaiserkritik in Prokops 'Kriegsgeschichte,'" *Electrum* 9 (2003): 215–29, and a Carolingian example in: Wojciech Fałkowski, "The Carolingian 'Speculum Principis'—the Birth of a Genre," *Acta Poloniae Historica* 98 (2008): 5–27. For a comparative approach see: Linda T. Darling, "Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability," in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. Albrecht Classen, FMEMC 14 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 223–42. Recent approaches are beginning to turn more towards what Mirrors for Princes can tell us about the social groups out of which they were created. See: Björn Weiler, "Thinking about Power Before Magna Carta: The Role of History," *Généalogies Constitutionelles* 1 (2019): 33–56. And Edward Roberts, *Flodoard of Rheims and the Writing of History in the Tenth Century*, CSMLT IV.113 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Furthermore, it is not new to point out that the *Chronicle* itself was deeply critical of certain rulers. It is impossible to read the text and not notice the vitriol that is levelled at Leo III, Constantine V, and Nikephoros I.[2] Careful readers have also pointed out that the *Chronicle* was critical (if less obviously so) of rulers such as Herakleios, Irene, and even Constantine the Great.[3]

Nevertheless, though scholars have read the *Chronicle* as critical of specific rulers, the only scholar to argue that these criticisms add up to a coherent narrative strategy has seen his approach largely dismissed.[4] I go beyond the scholars who have seen narrative strategies in the accounts of individual emperors, and even beyond I. Čičurov's hypothesis of an overall narrative in the *Chronicle* by not only arguing that individual emperors' reigns have a narrative, but that the accounts of individual reigns combine to give the work a coherent argument.

The reason that previous scholars have not seen this coherence in the work is that the *Chronicle* only truly reveals itself as a coherent *Kaiserkritik* when the form of the text in the manuscript *PG 1710* is brought into the foreground. *PG 1710* is deserving of such emphasis because it not only represents the earliest surviving copy of the text but preserves the original form of the work, a form that is explicitly arranged as a series of imperial portraits (see chapter 1, sections 4.2 and 5). The imperial portraits in *PG 1710* function as a series of types and so invite readers to look for interlocking typologies—both positive and negative. Furthermore, many passages that are distinct, separate entries in

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2   F. Tinnefeld compared the invective approach used by the *Chronographia* and other Byzantine historical texts under the idea of "metaphysical defamation" (Metaphysische Diffamierung) as identified by divine signs and punishments in Franz Hermann Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie: von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (München: W. Fink, 1971), 48, 65–72.

3   See Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 72–73; Roger D. Scott, "The Image of Constantine the Great in Malalas and Theophanes," in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, ed. Paul Magdalino, PSPBS 2 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 57–71; Jenny Ferber, "Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius," in *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference*, ed. Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, Michael J. Jeffreys, and Ann Moffatt, BYZAUS 1 (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, 1981), 32–42.

4   Igor S. Čičurov, *Vizantijskie istoričeskie sočineniâ: "Hronografiâ" Feofana, "Breviarij" Nikifora: teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980). This work has been accessible to me through the translations of my research assistant Aidar Raev, to whom I am extremely grateful. Even recent discussions do not articulate an overall agenda or argument to the work. See: Anthony Kaldellis, "Byzantine Historical Writing, 500–920," in *Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 2, *400–1400*, ed. Chase F. Robinson and Sarah Foot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 201–17.

later recensions are grouped together in *PG 1710* so that many sections that have previously been read as distinct annual entries in fact are part of multi-year narrative blocks.[5] Readers of the manuscript *PG 1710* would encounter these blocks as subdivisions in the narratives of individual emperors.[6] Furthermore, these subdivisions to the reigns of emperors give structural cues as to how to interpret the deeds and policies of each.

In this chapter, I explain how the *Chronicle* connected its imperial types by pursuing the specifically negative imperial images. I argue that these negative imperial images, or antitypes, lay the groundwork for readers to create meaning out of the past for the present in three ways. First, the *Chronicle* uses a coherent and consistent set of political virtues to critique these emperors. Second, these evaluations permit the accounts of the emperors to fall into types and antitypes of each other—to illustrate the point, I show how three sets of imperial father-son pairs correspond. Third, the juxtaposed imperial types play into the crescendo of a carefully crafted polemic against Nikephoros I (discussed in chapter 7). The types do not merely communicate to a reader that an individual emperor is "good" or "bad" but establish trans-historical templates for discerning the past, recognizing the present, and working towards the future.

1   The Imperial Antitype: The Greedy Emperor

The *Chronicle*'s negative images of imperial rule agree on the point that greed (πλεονεξία) is the ultimate imperial vice. The bad emperor is revealed first by greedy fiscal policies, followed by a susceptibility to turn to heresy in response to disaster. A succession of greedy emperors, from the first century into the ninth, builds up through the eighth-century Isaurian emperors. Only *after* Leo III had already expressed the heresy of exorbitant taxation does the *Chronicle* show the emperor imposing prohibitions on religious imagery— iconoclasm—in response to a massive earthquake on the island of Thera. The type of the greedy emperor culminates with Nikephoros I whose greed is depicted as its own natural disaster, worse than earthquake or invasion.

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5   F. Tinnefeld's approach gestures towards this with his comments on the importance of comparison in the *Chronographia*'s defamation of Leo III, Constantine V, and Nikephoros I. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 71–72.

6   When there is a lacuna in that manuscript, for the argument that follows I rely on the evidence of the later ninth-century manuscripts *Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155*.

The connection between greed and heresy is established—perhaps surprisingly—by the account of Constantine the Great and his son Constantius. This pairing establishes a type that is re-typified in Herakleios and Constans, and then fulfilled later in Leo III and Constantine V. In all of these pairs, a father figure starts out seeming to be an ideal emperor whose military prowess initially saves the empire. However, each father figure emperor is then persuaded to delve into heresy by a type (we would say the racist stereotype) of the "scheming Jew."[7] This leads to a negative ending to the fathers' reigns. The sons who succeed them oversee calamitous reigns from the very start due to following their fathers' late errors.

The early entries of the *Chronicle* applied a dichotomy between imperial greed and imperial εὐεργεσία (liberality and generosity to the public) through a consistent link between imperial tax policy and religious policy. This idea is not new to the *Chronicle*. The innovation of the work was to apply the idea across imperial history: to show the same story playing out again and again. We can clarify both the dichotomy between these two attributes and what the reader was told to make of that dichotomy in the explicit comparison stated in the entry for AM 5796, between Constantine the Great's father Constantius (r. 293–306) and his senior co-emperor Diocletian (r. 284–305).

> [Constantius] was satisfied with a small share of the empire. He was very gentle and kindly in a manner and did not concern himself with the public treasury. Rather he wanted his subjects to have riches. So restrained was he in the acquisition of riches that he provided public banquets and honoured many of his friends at drinking parties and so was much loved by the Gauls who contrasted him with the severe Diocletian and the bloodthirsty Maximianus Herculius from whom they had escaped because of [Constantius].[8]

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7   See the wide-ranging collected studies in Guy G. Stroumsa et al., eds., *Jews in Byzantium: Dialects of Minority and Majority Cultures*, Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2012). And, for an approach that contextualizes textual biases and accusations from the period of the *Chronographia* within economic migration see: Joshua Holo, *Byzantine Jewry in the Mediterranean Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31–50.

8   ὃς ὀλίγῳ μέρει τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀρκούμενος λίαν ἦν ἥμερος καὶ ἀγαθὸς τὸν τρόπον, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ ταμεῖον ἐσπουδάζετο· μᾶλλον γὰρ τοὺς ὑπηκόους θησαυροὺς ἔχειν ἐβούλετο. καὶ τοσοῦτον ἦν ἐγκρατὴς περὶ χρημάτων κτῆσιν, ὥστε καὶ πανδήμους ἐπιτελεῖν ἑορτὰς καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν φίλων συμποσίοις τιμῶν ἠγαπᾶτο πάνυ παρὰ τῶν Γάλλων τῷ πικρῷ Διοκλητιανῷ καὶ τῷ φονικῷ Μαξιμιανοῦ τοῦ Ἑρκουλίου συγκρινόντων, ὧν ἀπηλλάγησαν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ. ms 16 / dB 10.

Constantius embodied an open-handed approach to power, sharing the empire's resources generously, whereas Diocletian was a harsh lord. This entry does not simply invite comparison, it makes explicit and unambiguous that the contrast is between a severe and greedy emperor and one who wants to use wealth to make his subjects rich.

Before entering into extended readings of this and other passages, I want to emphasize that though the *Chronographia* is largely composed of excerpts, it is entirely legitimate and warranted to look for connections even in the choices of words in the narrative. Scholars have too often accepted an indebted citation to mean a verbatim copy, failing to notice the fundamental changes that the *Chronicle* made to the texts it excerpted.[9] For instance, in regards to the above passage both C. Mango and R. Scott as well as I. Rochow have pointed out that the description of Constantius is indebted to the tenth book of Eutropius' *Breviarium*.[10] The *Breviarium* of Eutropius is a concise Roman history that was translated into Greek by Paeanios in the fifth century.[11] Eutropius' original does not survive but Paeanios' translation (which George or Theophanes likely used) does. Though the passage in the *Chronicle* was derived from this source and the progression of ideas is the same, hardly a word of the original coincides with the narrative of the *Chronicle*.[12] Eutropius (via Paeanius) had emphasized that Constantius' imperial banquets had borrowed from

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9   This point was demonstrated by Jakov Ljubarskij, "Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structure in Byzantine Historical Writings," *Symbolae Osloenses* 73, no. 1 (1998): 5–22.

10   Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 16–17; Ilse Rochow, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes: Quellenkritisch-Historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715–813*, BBA 57 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1991).

11   Barry Baldwin, *ODB* s.v. "Eutropius."

12   Compare MS 16 / dB 10 with Eutropius' account in Hans Droysen, ed., *Eutropii Breviarium cum versionibus et continuationibus*, MGH AA 2, (Berlin: Weidmann, 1879), 170. It is equally possible that the *Chronographia*'s rendition is that of the sixth century work of Capito Lycius which I have not been able to consult. The rendition in the *Chronicle* focused on Constantius' restraint in the acquisition of wealth for the state treasury. George/ Theophanes eliminated Eutropius' discussion of Constantius using neighbors' silver plate to entertain guests, as well as the statement that it would be "better that the state's resources be held by private individuals than they should be retained in a single vault" (καὶ οἰκεῖον γὰρ ἡγούμενος πλοῦτον τὸν τῶν ὑπηκόων τὰς μὲν ἐκείνων συνεκρότει κτήσεις, τὰς δὲ βασιλικὰς ταρὰ φαῦλον ἐποιεῖτο), an idea that may have struck him as distracting from the main point, that Constantius "did not concern himself with the public treasury; rather, he wanted his subjects to have riches" (καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ ταμιεῖον ἐσπουδάζετο· μᾶλλον γὰρ τοὺς ὑπηκόους θησαυροὺς ἔχειν ἐβούλετο).

aristocratic treasuries, literally using their very plates. The *Chronographia* removes such details to construct a simple dichotomy.

Emperors either lived up to the ideal of fiscal leniency and orthodox unity or else exhibited avarice and then impiety. What is perhaps surprising is the degree to which the *Chronographia* used these contrasts to highlight the importance of imperial generosity over simple piety. When the emperor Diocletian dies his type is continued seamlessly by the emperor Galerius Maximianus whose severity and reliance on the imperial treasury are also set in contrast to Constantine's satisfaction with his own wealth and his avoidance of the public treasury. This is underscored in the next entry where it is explained that Galerius persecuted Christians out of greed rather than conviction.[13] Under the entry for AM 5797, Constantine is identified as emperor, but in fact Maxentius still reigns in Rome, and Galerius is the senior emperor of the East, a "fornicator" who not only engages with the trickery of demons, but

> ordered the total destruction of the Christians not so much because of his own impiety as to plunder their property.[14]

That is, Galerius persecutes but the issue is not so much his opposition to the Christian faith but his actual pursuit: their belongings. Once Constantine becomes emperor, the contrast is again emphasized:

> In this year Constantine the Great, having become sole ruler of all the Roman lands, gave his mind entirely to holy matters by building churches and enriching them lavishly from public funds.[15]

The victory of Constantine in becoming emperor was a victory for generosity and liberality.

This pattern continues throughout the *Chronicle*. Good emperors are equally pious and generous to the public. Evil emperors are greedy and thereby they are heretics or apostates, such as the "frugal and avaricious" Julian. Julian attacked the church, but above all his evil was apparent in his frugality and avarice.[16] The *Chronicle* castigated Julian not for his apostasy from Christainity in favor of pagan religious beliefs but for his administrative policies, for

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13   MS 20 / dB 13 (AM 5797).
14   MS 20 / dB 12–13 (AM 5797).
15   MS 27 / dB 16 (AM 5810).
16   MS 76–78 / dB 46–48 (AM 5853).

overturning the political order by recalling exiled bishops, for expelling trusted ministers, and most of all for expelling members of the imperial household.

> Similarly he expelled the cooks, because of his frugal ways, and the barbers, since one was sufficient for many, as he used to say. From the public post he removed the camels and asses, the oxen and mules, and only allowed horses to serve, because of the great avarice to which he was a slave, even to the point of idolatry.[17]

Thus Julian, even before he apostatized from the faith, had already revealed himself as unfit for rule by his greed, frugality, and avarice. In the *Chronicle* greed is a sign of evil as much or more so than heresy. With this in mind I turn to how the *Chronicle* develops this ethic in its typologies, manipulating its content through some basic narrative strategies.

2 The Progenitor-Successor Type: Constantine-Constantius

2.1 *The Good but Deceived Progenitor-Type: Constantine I*

In the following analyses of the reigns of emperors I begin by describing the unique qualities of the text in *PG 1710*. In the case of Constantine the Great the manuscript establishes the pattern to come by proclaiming the beginning of his reign with a header in the top margin (figure 5.1).[18] As stated in chapter 1, such a "header" is consistent through the manuscript, recognized as such by

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17 ὁμοίως καὶ μαγείρους διὰ τὸ λιτὸν τῆς διαίτης καὶ κουρίσκους διὰ τὸ ἕνα πολλοῖς ἀρκεῖν, ὡς ἔλεγεν. τοῦ δὲ δημοσίου δρόμου τάς τε καμήλους καὶ ὄνους, βόας καὶ ἡμιόνους ἐξέβαλεν, μόνους ἵππους συγχωρήσας ὑπουργεῖν διὰ πολλὴν φιλαργυρίαν ἧς δοῦλος ἦν, ὡς πρὸς τῆς εἰδωλολατρείας. MS 77 / dB 47 (AM 5853). C. Mango and R. Scott note the passage quotes Theodore Lector and Socrates, but the final explanatory clause was added by either George the Synkellos or Theophanes.

18 It is important to make a general note about the difference between a history of an emperor's reign and the use of the years of an emperor's reign to mark time, which applies not only to the dating of reigns across all versions of the *Chronographia*, but to the science of medieval chronography generally. The use of Constantine's reign as a dating marker means that the *Chronographia* initiates the reign of Constantine from the moment when he is proclaimed "Augustus" by the troops loyal to his father in Trier in AD 306, rather than when one might say the historical, full and undisputed reign of Constantine begins as, for instance, would be noted by modern textbooks (such as: when Constantine defeated Maxentius at Rome (AD 312), or agreed to a treaty with Licinius at Milan (AD 313), or defeated Licinius at Chrysopolis (AD 324)).
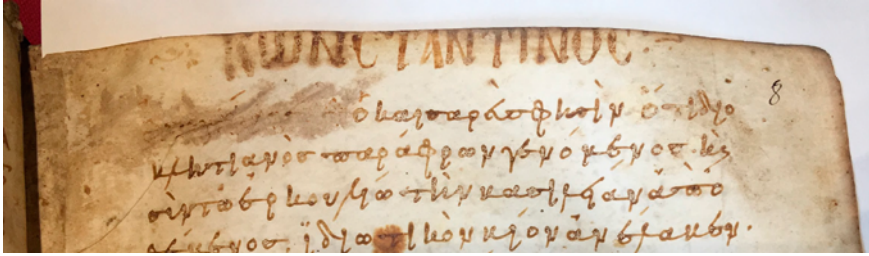
FIGURE 5.1   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 8r top margin: ΚΩΝϹΤΑΝΤΙΝΟϹ (Constantine)
PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE BY THE AUTHOR

J. Signes Codoñer and confirmed by F. Ronconi as original.[19] The organizing
principle of the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* is each emperor's reign, which thus consti-
tutes a coherent narrative block in the text.

Constantine's name establishes his reign as a narrative block, and—unlike
in the critical edition and translation—the Κόσμου Ἔτη or *anni mundi* (AM)
notations do not denote every single year but instead occur only occasionally
and as such provide the structure of the text, subdivisions within these main
narrative blocks. That is, not only are there many fewer "AM" years, but under
Constantine I there are nearly as many undated entries headed by "In this
year." Table 5.1 summarizes the structure of the reign of Constantine I as pre-
sented in *PG 1710*. The content notes refer to de Boor's edition to allow read-
ers to reconstruct a working version of the text of the *Chronicle* as in *PG 1710*
themselves.

TABLE 5.1   Reign of Constantine in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
5797	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5797
	– 5798, 5799, 5800, 5801 = (dates without content; thus not in *PG 1710*)
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5802

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19   Juan Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed.
      Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association
      des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 169–71 especially n51 and
      n52.

TABLE 5.1   Reign of Constantine in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (*cont.*)

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
5803	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5803, 5805, 5806, 5807, and 5808
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
	– 5804 and 5809 are dates without content; thus not in *PG 1710*
5810	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5810
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5811, 5812 and 5813
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
	– variance: five lines from de Boor's text absent (dB 17.17b–17.22a)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5814
	– variance: four lines from de Boor's text absent (dB 18.17b–20)
5815	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5815
5816	– text in *PG 1710* = first part of de Boor's 5816 (n.b. minor addition at end)
In this year ...	– text in *PG 1710* = second portion of de Boor's 5816 (f. 16v)
5817	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5817 (n.b. minor addition at end)
5818	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5818
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5819 and 5820
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
	– variance: last line phrased differently than in de Boor (dB 28.17)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5821 and 5822
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry

TABLE 5.1   Reign of Constantine in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (*cont.*)

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
5823	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5823, 5824, and 5825
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
	– *PG 1710* variance: few words (dB 29.11); five lines (dB 29.28–31) absent
In this year …	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5826
5827	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5827
	– *PG 1710* variance: fifteen lines from de Boor's text (dB 32.27b–33.8) absent
In this year …	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5828
	– *PG 1710* variance: first three lines under prev. entry;
	– four lines (dB 33.9–17a) from de Boor's text absent
	– two words (dB 34.4b–5) at entry end in de Boor's text absent

The layout of the table follows *PG 1710* in emphasizing each "AM" heading as more significant than when an entry is introduced by "In this year." The latter are narrative transitions but minor ones that do not occasion a line break. The table also provides three different types of notes on the content. Many "years" in de Boor's edition are only a dating notice with no narrative content at all. I have noted them as such. These dating notices make no appearance whatsoever in *PG 1710* since that manuscript has no "empty" entries (i.e., with a date but no content). Thus, the absence of these sorts of entries in the *PG 1710* version of the *Chronicle* should not be taken to mean a meaningful entry was excised. I have also noted the times when the content from multiple annual entries in de Boor's edition falls under a single entry in *PG 1710*. For instance, all of the content divided between AM 5803–5809 in de Boor is under "AM 5803" in *PG 1710*. Finally, I noted where *PG 1710* is missing text or has added text to what is in de Boor's edition.

Even though table 5.1 gives the appearance of significant difference between the text of *PG 1710* and de Boor's edition I emphasize again that these are primarily differences in arrangement and that the differences in the actual textual material are rather small—not so small as to be meaningless, but not large

enough to substantiate the idea that *PG 1710* is an epitome or a summary. Out of the approximately 700 lines narrating Constantine's reign in later versions, *PG 1710* has approximately 37 lines fewer, meaning that *PG 1710* contains 95% of the text in the other recensions. These differences are not random. In *PG 1710* Constantine is *only* described positively up until the end of the very last entry on his reign. On the other hand, in later versions of the text (the versions reproduced by de Boor) problems and errors are introduced earlier in Constantine's reign. It seems to me that the differences are most easily accounted for as additions made to the text in an attempt to slightly alter the reader's idea of Constantine's reign. Nevertheless, whether these differences are actually additions or deletions is a question that is not essential to the argument of this book. For simplicity and clarity, I will refer to them in what follows as "additions," since the focus of my readings is to explain the coherently constructed version of the *Chronicle* in the mid-ninth-century manuscript *PG 1710*.

Before proceeding it is essential to understand how the arrangement of the textual material functions in the *PG 1710* version. In my discussion in chapter 1 of the layout of the reign of Diocletian in *PG 1710*, I suggested that the AM years served to create distinct narrative breaks, that is, subdivisions or sections in the narratives of specific emperors' reigns.[20] Building on that hypothesis, I note the events which are the focus in these subdivisions marked in *PG 1710* with an AM heading. A brief description of Constantine's reign according to the events in these subdivisions is in table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2   Narrative trajectory for Constantine

5797	*Start of Constantine's Reign*
5803	*Constantine celebrates taking Rome as "victory of the cross"*
5810	*Constantine issues proclamations favoring Christians*
	Conclusion of entry recalls vision of "the sign of the Cross"
5815	*Constantine defeats Licinius ("through might of the Cross")*
5816	*Constantine's Vicennalia (twenty-year reign celebration)*
	First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea)
	Constantinople begins to be built ("moved by a divine sign")

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20   Note that as explained in chapter 1, these are the Years of the World noted by *all* early manuscript traditions. The other ninth-century Greek recension also adds "Years of Constantine" in between the AM notices identified here for the reign of Constantine but the noted "years of the world" are the same in both recensions.

TABLE 5.2   Narrative trajectory for Constantine (*cont.*)

5817	*Persian Christians Persecuted*
	Empress Helena discovers True Cross in Jerusalem
5818	*Constantine defeats Germans ("through power of Cross")*
	Constantine builds in Constantinople, gifts to Churches
5823	*Constantine deals with famine; heretic Arius returns*
5827	*Plots vs. Athanasius as result of Arius' return*
	Constantine entrusts his succession to Arians

These highlights of Constantine's reign indicate the importance of the "power of the Cross" in the account of his victories. Additionally, there is a shift in tone between the first seven entries and the last two. Whereas the last two entries indicate natural and ecclesiastical problems beginning to beset the empire, the entries up through AM 5818 show Constantine promoting Christians and scoring victories, all associated with the power of the Cross.

I will briefly describe how the entries AM 5803, AM 5815, AM 5817, and AM 5818 all make a direct association of Constantine with the Cross of the Christ. The phrase "through the power of the Cross" attributes agency to the cross. This phrase only occurs in these entries, it is distinctive to Constantine. But even when the specific phrase does not occur, these sections still give the cross a role. The first entry of Constantine's reign AM 5797 is the entry in which Constantine receives his famous vision of the "victory-bringing cross" before defeating Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge. While the focus for the entry for AM 5816 is the Council of Nicaea and the beginning of the construction of Constantinople, it also highlights Constantine's acquiescence to his mother Helena's desire to discover the cross in Jerusalem, a narrative that is continued immediately under the next entry, AM 5817. Finally, the remaining entry in these first seven—AM 5810—emphasizes Constantine's bringing of unity to the empire and concludes with a discussion of Constantine's legitimacy that winds around to a reminder that Constantine's vision of the Cross marked him as divinely favored.[21] The cross marks Constantine as the bringer of unity when Constantine defeated

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21   After his specific acts of legislation are noted, the *Chronographia* summarizes that "Under these circumstances a deep and calm peace prevailed throughout the inhabited world and there was rejoicing among the faithful as whole nations came over daily to faith in Christ, accepted baptism, and broke up their ancestral idols." This entry goes on to identify those who oppose this approach—the heretic Arian and the "mad" rival emperor

that Maxentius who was usurper at Rome and who was destroyed by Constantine at the Milvian bridge *when the sign of the Cross appeared to him in the sky*.[22]

In sum, then, each of the seven entries for this first part of the narrative of the reign of Constantine establish his identity as a bringer of unity and peace, as identified by his constant association with the talismanic sign of the Holy Cross. Constantine's victories "through the Cross" are characterized by their bringing peace and unity to the empire.

What happens to this portrait in the final two entries? AM 5823 and AM 5827 are puzzling as they change the narrative trajectory just described. AM 5823, as presented in *PG 1710*, sets up a conflict between the orthodox Athanasios and the heretic Eusebius of Nicomedia at the very end of that entry. In order to make clear how the narrative of *PG 1710* version works, I have edited C. Mango and R. Scott's translation of this entire entry to reflect the layout and contents of the version in *PG 1710*. The reader should compare this version with the different version (representing the later Greek recension) in K. de Boor's edition or in C. Mango and R. Scott's translation.[23]

In AM 5823, AD 323 [n.b. our AD 330/1]: When the seventh indiction was about to follow,[24] a famine occurred in the East which was so extremely severe that villagers gathered together in great throngs in the territory of the Antiochenes and of Kyros and assailed one another and stole [food] in attacks by night, and finally even in daylight they would break into the granaries, looting and stealing everything in the storehouses before they went away. A *modius* of corn cost 400 pieces of silver. Constantine the Great graciously gave an allowance of corn to the churches in each city to provide continuous sustenance for widows, the poor in hostels, and for clerics. The Church in Antioch received 36,000 *modii* of corn.

Licinius. Both of these disrupt the unity of the empire by disrupting the unity of the church (for these are seen as coterminous). MS 27 / dB 16.

22   MS 31 / dB 18. Emphasis mine.

23   MS 47–50 / dB 29–30.

24   This narrative section is noted as AM 5823, nevertheless the indiction cycle is *always* the way the *Chronographia* dates events when it wishes to be precise. The seventh indiction of this cycle started in September at the beginning of AM 5826 (i.e., our September AD 333) making the year referred to here the sixth year of the Indiction cycle, AM 5825 (i.e., our September AD 332). The entry as in *PG 1710* is thus "correct" in terms of our modern reconstruction of the chronology of events, *contra* C. Mango and R. Scott's assertion of its erroneousness (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 48n1).

In the same year, during a very severe earthquake in Cyprus, the city of Salamis collapsed and killed a considerable number.

Arius was recalled from exile following a feigned repentance and sent to Alexandria. He was not accepted by Athanasios.

In this [the next] year[25] the *tricennalia* of the most pious and victorious Constantine was celebrated with great munificence.

In Antioch a star appeared in the eastern part of the sky during the day, emitting much smoke as though from a furnace, from the third to the fifth hour.

Arius along with Eusebius of Nicomedia and those of like mind were stirred up and offered sworn statements of their orthodoxy to the emperor. They persuaded him falsely that they were in agreement with the fathers of Nicaea. Convinced by them, the emperor was annoyed with Athanasios for not accepting back Arius and Euzoios who had been deposed by Alexander, Euzoios being then a deacon. Eusebius [of Nicomedia] and his supporters, having found a pretext, campaigned against Athanasios as a champion of the true faith.

This entry accomplishes several things. It begins by continuing the narrative of the good Constantine through his correct response to natural disasters by offering generosity to his people. However, it introduces the beginning of a new narrative that would continue to the end of his reign: in being fooled by heretics, Constantine allowed disunity to creep into the empire. Arius makes a "feigned repentance" and so returns to the empire. Constantine's own *tricennalia* celebration becomes a side note in this story of Constantine being fully persuaded by Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia to become vexed with Athanasios who—in the *Chronicle*—represents orthodoxy and thus unity of faith and empire.

In *PG 1710* Arius' recall and his subsequent acceptance first in Alexandria and then in Constantinople are a connected series of events. This in turn makes the narrative of Constantine's deception much more apparent and coherent in *PG 1710* than later recensions (as reproduced in de Boor's edition). The entry under AM 5827 follows and is the last of Constantine's reign in *PG 1710*. The first part of the entry begins with a re-iteration of Constantine's "vexation" (ἀγανάκτησις) with Athanasios, which gives Eusebius of Nicomedia an "instrument for evil" (ὄργανον κακίας). They construct a false trial, an ambush

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25   In the narrative sequencing of the *Chronographia* "the next year" communicates that this event refers to the seventh year of the Indiction cycle (AM 5826 or our AD 333).

for Athanasios. Soon afterwards Constantine would restore Athanasios to good standing, but Eusebius won out when he once again "moved the Christ-loving emperor to anger and drove him to banish the great Athanasios to Treviri in Gaul." Constantine the Great's narrative ends with him falling into error by favoring Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia.

The conclusion of the AM 5827 entry, the last on Constantine in *PG 1710*, has the greatest differences between the different versions of the text. To show these differences, I again reproduce C. Mango and R. Scott's translation, but mark the additional text from other manuscripts (as in de Boor's edition) indented as a smaller font. The last sentence is the only case of two competing versions of any passage; I reproduce both versions here.

> These events took place in the 31st year of Constantine the Great while the divine Alexander was bishop of Constantinople.
>> and it was not, as Eusebius alone states, while Eusebius of Nicomedia was holding the throne of Constantinople that he plotted against Athanasios at the consecration. That this is false is shown from the total period of time, since Constantine ruled in all for 32 years. After his first decade, in his 13th year he arrived in Byzantium and found Alexander's predecessor Metrophanes was bishop, after whom Alexander was bishop for 23 years. The period from the beginning of Constantine the Great's rule to the death of Alexander was consequently 37 years, which Constantine did not attain. Thus from the total period of time it can be shown that Eusebius did not rule the throne of Constantinople in Constantine's time. This also follows from what has been said above about Arius and Athanasios. For Athanasios' banishment and Arius' death occurred after Constantine's 30th year and after the consecration at Jerusalem. The great Alexander was still alive at that time.
>
> In this [next] year:
>> there flourished Eustathios, a presbyter in Constantinople, who had devoted himself to an apostolic life and had reached the summit of virtue; as also the builder Zenobios, who erected the Martyrium in Jerusalem at Constantine's instruction. In the same year many of the Assyrians in Persia were being sold in Mesopotamia by the Saracens, and the Persians declared war on the Romans. The pious
>
> Constantine went out to the city of Nicomedia on his way to fight the Persians, but became ill and died in peace.
>> Some Arians claim that he was then deemed worthy of holy baptism at the hands of Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had been transferred to Constantinople. This is false, as has been pointed out; for he was baptized by Silvester in Rome, as we have already demonstrated.

He lived in all 65 years and was emperor for 3 years and 10 months. He
wrote a will in which he left the Empire to his three sons, Constantine,
Constans, and Constantius, having carried out his office with piety and
mercy. Becoming by God's providence the first emperor of the Christians,
he gained power over many barbarians from Britain to Persia and over
usurpers of his own race, destroying his enemies by the sign of the life-
giving Cross. He entrusted his will to a certain Arian presbyter who had
been introduced with evil intent by his sister Constantia, enjoining
on him to hand it to none other than Constantius, the emperor of the
East. He also ordered Athanasios to return from exile. Constantius, after
arriving from the East, buried his father in [the church of] the Apostles.
The unholy Arian presbyter, after handing over the will to Constantius,
enjoyed great influence in the palace and even persuaded the empress
herself to become an Arian. His accomplices in this were

> the chief Eunuch Eusebius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and other Arians of their
> persuasion.

Eusebius of Nicomedia, and those of his persuasion.

The narrative goals for this final entry in the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* are focused.
The text associates Constantine both directly and indirectly with the narrative
of the Arian bishop, Eusebius of Nicomedia: for instance, Constantine's final
campaign seems to matter primarily for its point of departure, from Nicomedia.
Constantine himself shows no signs of converting to the Arian persuasion, but
he puts unfounded trust in the Arians. Constantine allows them into the pal-
ace and entrusts them with fulfilling his will, ensuring the empire passes to
Constantius. Though the reader is reminded, one last time, that Constantine
was victorious "by the sign of the life-giving Cross," the final victory belongs to
Eusebius of Nicomedia.

Over half of the textual differences between the *PG 1710* version of the reign
of Constantine and that in the other manuscripts are accounted for in the pas-
sage just quoted.[26] If we consider these differences as additions added to later

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26   Here is a summary of the contents of the six sections (totaling thirty-seven lines) which
     are absent from *PG 1710* (added or removed, depending on one's point of view): (1) Added
     to AM 5813 (~ five lines: dB 17.17b–17.22a): Constantine sends out Hosios of Cordova to
     root out the Arian heresy in Alexandria and correct "the easterners" who were using the
     Jewish calendar to celebrate Easter, but he is *unsuccessful*. (2) Added to AM 5814 (~ four
     lines: dB 18.17b–20): editorial argument which (a) excuses Constantius and Constantine
     for having married sisters; and, (b) clarifies the family tree of Constantine the great.
     (3) Added to AM 5823 (~ one line: dB 29, 11): the basilica of Nicomedia is burned down by
     fire. (4) Added to AM 5825 (~ five lines: dB 29.28–31): Dalmatius is appointed as Caesar.

copies of the *Chronicle* the original narrative purpose of Constantine's reign becomes clear. These additions either expand on the theme of Nicomedia itself or elaborate on Eusebius of Nicomedia as the heretical (Arian) enemy of Athanasios of Alexandria. In these additions Nicomedia itself appears (independently or by association with Eusebius of Nicomedia) several additional times: 5823, 5827, 5828. For instance, a fire burning down the city's cathedral under AM 5827 associates God's negative judgment with the city as a whole. The later additions also accuse Eusebius first as Constantine's appointee to the patriarchate of Constantinople (5827), and secondly as the bishop who baptized Constantine on his deathbed (5828). In a narrative on the greatness of Constantine, Eusebius of Nicomedia comes under attack for being the figure who corrupts Constantine's piety and orthodoxy. Once this is acknowledged, minor additions that otherwise seem random can be explained. For instance, the Caesar Dalmatius was introduced to develop the portrait of Eusebius. Dalmatius features in the addition to AM 5827 to play an important role in rescuing Athanasius from an ambush by Eusebius of Nicomedia and his supporters.[27]

The final addition falls under the second entry after AM 5810—an undated "In this year" entry labelled AM 5814 by de Boor. This passage relates to two other editorializing sections (both in the above extended quotation) under AM 5827, and in the first entry after AM 5827—another undated "In this year" entry labelled AM 5828 by de Boor. These additions all bring up negative accusations against Constantine in order to dismiss them, all apologizing for Constantine in various ways. The addition after AM 5810 denies implied reproaches against the piety of Constantine's immediate family and then provides a schematic genealogical table for Constantine's family. The addition in AM 5827 denies a narrative by Eusebius of Caesarea, that Constantine himself appointed Eusebius of Nicomedia the patriarch of Constantinople. Finally, the additions after AM 5827 give a reason for Constantine's expedition against the Persians, associate him once more with Jerusalem, and above all bring

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(5) Added to AM 5827 (~ fifteen lines: dB 32.27b–33.8): editorial argument refuting the idea that by end of his life Constantine had appointed the heretical Eusebius of Nicomedia as Patriarch of Constantinople. (6) Added to AM 5828 (~ seven lines: dB 33.9–17a and dB 34.4b–5): notice of: two saints regarded as orthodox (Eustathios of Constantinople and Zenobios of Jerusalem); sale of Assyrian slaves in Persia by "Saracens"; editorial argument harshly refuting the idea that Eusebius of Nicomedia baptized Constantine at the end of the emperor's life; minor addition at end associating two Constantinopolitans (unnamed presbyter; chief Eunuch Eusebius) with the evil Eusebius of Nicomedia.

27   "The Caesar Dalmatius, the emperor's nephew, and his band of soldiers, were scarcely able to save Athanasios from impending death at [his accusers'] hands." MS 51 / dB 31.

up the argument that he was baptized by Eusebios of Nicomedia in order to refute it and argue that he was baptized by Silvester of Rome.

These additions from the later Greek recensions do not oppose the narrative in *PG 1710* so much as they get in its way. On its own, *PG 1710* offers a clean account of Constantine, a positive image of him that ignores his well-known sins and errors. *PG 1710* does not argue that Constantine was *not* baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia, it simply asserts that Constantine *was* baptized by Silvester of Rome. *PG 1710* does not argue that Constantine did *not* appoint Eusebius of Nicomedia as patriarch, it simply asserts that Eusebius of Nicomedia became patriarch after Constantine's death. The later additions provide a more fleshed out picture of a historical Constantine, but they do so at the expense of the coherent portrait which we saw *PG 1710* maintain until its very last entry, when Constantine falters. This portrait presented a universally positive image of Constantine, verified by the life-giving cross, until the very end when he erred on who to entrust with the succession of the empire.[28] In sum, the point here is not whether, historically speaking, these textual differences are additions or deletions. The point is that *without* these expanded editorializing passages and argumentative additions, *PG 1710* maintains a much tighter narrative focus on Constantine. Their absence makes for a much cleaner, and more direct portrait of the emperor that allows him to be read as an image, a type of the ideal emperor, until just before the end.

2.2   *The Errant Successor Paradigm: Constantius*

In the final entry for Constantine, **AM 5827** (table 5.2), the version in *PG 1710* simply calls the emperor "Constantine" whereas the additions make him the "pious Constantine." In other words, *PG 1710* invites the reader to see Constantine as the initial type of the good emperor, but at the same time in its deathbed entry un-divinizes him as less than perfect. Constantine was the Great, the best emperor of the Romans and the "type" of the pious ruler. But at the end of his life Constantine was deceived by Arians and entrusted them with the succession of his kingdom. Their influence led to Constantia (his sister) bringing Arian priests into the palace, to her becoming an Arian, and to Constantius' twenty-four-year reign in which Arians ruled over empire and ecclesia and brought disunity to the οἰκουμένη. The "ideal type" was far

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28   Even the seemingly random piece of text concerning the efforts of Constantine to support Hosios of Cordova (AM 5813) make sense if we consider that the figure of Constantine is under accusation for a lack of orthodoxy. The additions are also at times written in an explicit editorializing voice with a markedly different narrative tone—strident and argumentative—than the editorializing comments in *PG 1710*.
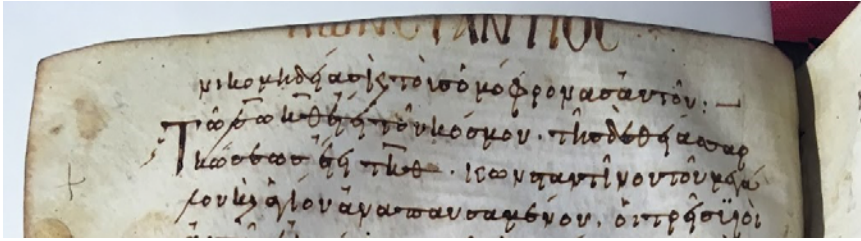
FIGURE 5.2   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 27v top margin: ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΟC (Constantius)
PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE BY THE AUTHOR

from perfect. The final component of Constantine's errors is how he passed his power to his son, Constantius.

PG 1710 marks the reign of Constantius as its own narrative section with a header in the top margin (figure 5.2). Through this narrative the consequences of Constantine's deception by Eusebius of Nicomedia are gradually revealed. Constantius may not have intended the loss of Constantine's peace, but his policies and his inability to stand up to the heretics opened the door to violence. That is, Constantius does not actively persecute "the Christians" and in the end he "repented of his great folly,"[29] but he does allow heretics—by the *Chronicle*'s definition misanthropic and divisive—to reign, especially over the church, and this led to serious consequences. The *Chronographia* repeatedly points out that Constantius was deceived in his doctrine rather than that he was evil and perversely attacked what was right.[30] This is poignantly emphasized by the transition between the patriarch Makedonios and the patriarch Eudoxios in the year AM 5852.

> Still holding the throne of Constantinople like a usurper, Makedonios transferred the body of Constantine the Great to St Akakios from the Holy Apostles, pleading the [imminent] collapse of that church. But when the people opposed him, there was considerable loss of life, with the result that the well and courtyard of the martyrium and the adjacent streets were filled with blood. When Constantius learned of this he became annoyed (ἠγανάκτησε) with Makedonios, ordered his deposition, and installed Eudoxios in his place, exchanging a great evil for a greater one.[31]

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29   MS 76 / dB 46.

30   MS 56 / dB 35 and MS 58 / dB 35 and MS 66 / dB 40 and MS 69–70 / dB 42 and MS 73 / dB 45 and MS 76 / dB 46.

31   MS 75 / dB 46.1–8.

Though Constantius may have intended to punish Makedonios for his evils against the people of Constantinople, his poor judgment meant he brought even greater evil upon them.

In sum, how should we characterize the portraits of Constantine and Constantius painted by *PG 1710*? The Constantine type is coherent as a narrative unit but closes in *PG 1710* with subtle but undeniable criticism.[32] In *PG 1710* only Constantius merits a narrative block of his own before we arrive at the reviled emperor Julian (the co-reigns of Constantine II (337–340) and Constans I (337–350) are not a part of the narrative structure in this way). This makes Constantius the single link between Constantine and Julian. We have already seen that the *Chronicle* uses Julian to define the greedy anti-type for emperors. In other words, Constantine is both the opposite type to Julian, and the beginning of the trajectory that leads to Julian. Constantine establishes the positive imperial type for the *Chronicle* and at the same time his end-of-life deception by heretics makes him the originator of a negative type that will eventually find its fulfillment in the iconoclast pairing of Leo III and Constantine V.

As Constantine becomes the positive imperial type—only deceived by corrupt priests at the very end of his reign and even then, not substantially—so Constantius remains the closest to a positive paradigm for the "deceived son" type. Though Constantius is a heretic he is one against his own good will.[33] It is in this way that the combined portraits of Constantine and Constantius provide positive models as well as set up the negative type that we will follow through the rest of the *Chronicle*: the pattern of the good emperor who is nonetheless open to deception, and so at last brings about havoc in his empire. This type of emperor suffers deception, and then bequeaths the Roman empire to a son who attains the throne already deceived. Subsequent father-son pairings show similar characteristics to Constantine-Constantius, but they are corruptions of this type. The degree to which they are corruptions give the reader a pattern through which to perceive a downward trajectory to the Roman Empire.

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32   Magdalino, *New Constantines*.
33   MS 58 / dB 35 (AM 5830).

3   **The Corruption of the Progenitor-Successor Type:**
       Herakleios-Constans

3.1   *The Progenitor Type Is Corrupted: Herakleios*

Due to a lacuna in *PG 1710*, we do not know how that manuscript origi-
nally framed the beginning of Herakleios' reign. However, Herakleios' reign
must have been divided into a coherent set piece with a header like that for
Constantine since this is so consistently the pattern through the rest of the
manuscript. The narrative structures particular to *PG 1710* frame Constans as
the successor to Herakleios, and so invite a reading of the two as a father-son
type in the mold of Constantine-Constantius. That is, there is no header in
PG 1710 for the one-year reign of Herakleios' son Heraklonas. Instead Constans
(who is Herakleios' grandson) is given a header that marks his as the next
imperial narrative (figure 5.3).[34]

The *Chronicle*'s account of Herakleios' reign draws from the panegyric of
George of Pisidia. George of Pisidia's rhetoric was so stridently militaristic
and religious that G. Regan could argue that Herakleios' campaign against
the Persian Empire should be regarded as the "First Crusade."[35] From a nar-
ratological point of view, J. Ferber has already convincingly demonstrated that
Herakleios' reign is divided into two sections, the turning point being the entry
for AM 6121.[36] This narrative strategy clearly builds on what we have already
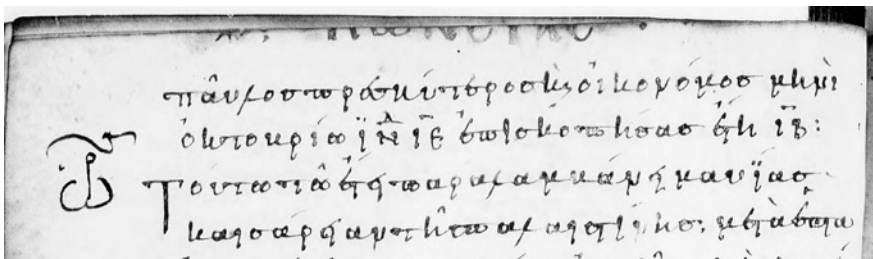
FIGURE 5.3   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 279v top margin: ΚΩΝCΤΑC (Constans) barely visible in the
             upper margin, that having been cropped
             IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

34   The notation in the left margin just below the header is found at key moments through-
      out the manuscript but based on the script and the color of the ink was not made by
      the original scribe. The abbreviation—which stands for ὡραῖον ("timely," or "useful")—is
      however excellent evidence for continued readings and that this moment in the text was
      also deemed important by medieval readers.
35   Geoffrey Regan, *First Crusader: Byzantium's Holy Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan,
      2003).
36   Ferber, "Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius."

seen in the reign of Constantine. In both narratives the first section empha-
sizes the virtues of the emperor as a successful military leader relying on the
power of God to sustain Roman victories, whereas in the second the succes-
sor and heir (Constans) would become trapped in his predecessor's erroneous
decision, exhibiting the imperial vice of greed. However, unlike Constantine
whose downfall is limited to the very last year of his reign and so is spared
from seeing any consequences of his deception, Herakleios was deceived in
his prime and so would live to see his own poor decision begin to unravel his
empire, a process fulfilled under Constans.

Table 5.3 presents the reign of Herakleios in *PG 1710* with the same form
of notation that I used for the reign of Constantine. There is a lacuna in the
PG 1710 manuscript for the reign of Herakleios (AM 6102–6133) that begins just
before Herakleios' reign in the middle of the entry for AM 6099 (at dB 295.15)
and ends in the middle of the entry for AM 6116 (at dB 313.6). As it is impos-
sible to read the early reign of Herakleios out of the manuscript *PG 1710*, for our
analytical goals we will have to rely on the versions preserved in other manu-
scripts. This primarily means guessing whether the "AM" years preserved in
other manuscripts match the same divisions in the missing portion of *PG 1710*.
We can be quite confident in these guesses: as I showed in chapter 1 when
PG 1710 notes an AM year it is always *also* in the other recensions. *PG 1710* may
have fewer marked AM entries than these other manuscripts, but not more.

TABLE 5.3   Reign of Herakleios in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
6102*	
6103*	
6111*	
6114*	
6116*	

*6102–6116 = LACUNA in *PG 1710*; these are the AM entries noted in other
manuscripts

	[*Resumption of PG 1710*]
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6117
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6118
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6119
	– variance: phrase of text at end of entry absent (dB 328.10b)
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6120

TABLE 5.3   Reign of Herakleios in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (*cont.*)

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
6121	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6121
6122	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6122
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6123
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6124
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6125
6126	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6126
6127	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6127
	– variance: three lines absent (dB 339.31–32; 339.34)
	– variance: AM 6128 as in de Boor is absent (dB 340.2–10)
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6129
6130	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6130
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6131
In this year …	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6132
	– variance: in *PG 1710* entry introduced with a header, "The Death of Herakleios" (f. 279r)

Consequently, even though a reading of the entire reign of Herakleios from the manuscript *PG 1710* is not possible, we can reconstruct a good approximation of his portrait. And, since the turning point in Herakleios' reign at AM 6121 *is* preserved in *PG 1710* we can use that manuscript for our reading of this key section.

The following summary (table 5.4) explains the narrative trajectory for Herakleios. In addition to what has already been stated, Herakleios parallels Constantine in that, while Constantine's mother led him to find the true Cross in Jerusalem, the Mother of God led Herakleios to the throne, to the recovery of Jerusalem, and the recovery of the True Cross. Just as in Constantine's narrative, after his victories Herakleios succumbs to the trickery of priests and accepts a heresy as true. Unlike Constantine, Herakleios continues to rule and so suffers the consequences of his decision before passing them on to trouble the reign of Constans.[37]

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37   Ferber, "Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius."

TABLE 5.4   Narrative trajectory for Herakleios

6102	*Herakleios overthrows Phokas by "Grace of God" on ships bearing*
	"reliquaries and icons of the Mother of God"
6103	*Herakleios attempts to repair the Empire through treaties*
6111	*Persia breaks peace; Herakleios' first campaign to Armenia*
6114	*Herakleios' second campaign, through Armenia*
6116	*Herakleios' third campaign, from Armenia through Persia*
	Victory by "help of Theotokos"; Cross returns to Jerusalem
6121	*Herakleios is deceived by heresy; "Amalek" devastates*
6122	*Rise of Muhammad; Arabs take Gaza, defeat Herakleios' brother*
	Herakleios abandons Jerusalem, Cross to Constantinople
6126	*Roman loss at Yarmuk; Arabs take Damascus and Alexandria*
6127	*Arabs take Jerusalem and Antioch, Edessa sends taxes*
6130	*Arabs take Edessa and Persia; Herakleios dies*

The narrative theme of the first section, the five entries up to AM 6121 are as follows. Herakleios comes to power through the help of the Mother of God (AM 6102).[38] In the first decade of his reign (the combined entries under AM 6103), Herakleios "found the affairs of the Roman state undone," through invasions by the Avars and especially the Perians who go on to conquer Egypt and Africa as well as seize the Cross when they sack Jerusalem.[39] Herakleios tries to reestablish peace with the invading Persians and Avars through tribute and diplomacy.[40] A quick series (AM 6111) explains a turning point. Herakleios makes peace with both the Avars and the Persians, only to see the peace broken by the Persians. Then "becoming filled with divine zeal" he decides to embark on an expedition against Persia "with God's help."[41] In a well-known series of passages reminiscent of a film montage, Herakleios trains up his army from "a state of great sluggishness, cowardice, indiscipline, and disorder"[42] into crack regiments through mock battles—"a frightening sight, yet one without the fear of danger, murderous clashes without blood, forms of violence without violence, so that each man might draw a lesson from that safe slaughter and remain more secure." As Herakleios had sailed into Constantinople

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38   "Herakleios arrived from Africa bringing fortified ships that had on their masts reliquaries and icons of the Mother of God." MS 427 / dB 298.

39   MS 429–33 / dB 300–301.

40   MS 433–34 / dB 301–2.

41   MS 435 / dB 302.

42   MS 436 / dB 303.

under the protection of icons of the Mother of God, so he embarks on this new expedition "taking in his hands the likeness of the Man-God," the famous *mandylion* icon.[43] He brings his troops to victory in taking the camp of the Persian army where they "raised their arms aloft to give thanks to God and to praise earnestly their emperor who had led them well."[44] Finally, in the fifth entry for his reign (AM 6116) Herakleios is ultimately victorious over Chosroes whose three-pronged attack is met in each case by Herakleios, in the first case "with God's help by the mediation of the all-praised Theotokos," in the second case "by God's might and help and by the intercession of the immaculate Virgin, the Mother of God," and in the third case "by God's might and the help of the Theotokos."[45] Finally making a "permanent peace," Herakleios received back "the precious and life-giving Cross"[46] with which he then processes through Constantinople in triumph before personally returning it to Jerusalem.[47]

It is important to note that the dramatic high point of the narrative is emphasized by the structure of *PG 1710*. Under the single entry which *PG 1710* labelled AM 6116 (which the other recensions divide into AM 6116–6120) Heraklios' military successes were conjoined with a narrative of restoration. Upon his return to Constantinople from the Persian wars, "the people of the city … went out to meet [Herakleios] … acclaiming him with tears of joy … dancing with joy" in a celebration mirroring the Hebrew king David's recovery of the Ark of the Covenant from the Philistines.[48] The restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem was also conjoined with Herakleios' forced conversion of Jews (unfortunately a positive event for the author of the *Chronicle*), and his restoration of Zacharias as the patriarch of Jerusalem. The *Chronicle* concluded the section by lifting another idea from George of Pisidia, a comparison of Heraclius' triumphant return in the seventh year of his campaign to God's rest on the seventh day of creation.[49]

Prior to AM 6121, the divinely favored Herakleios met with every success. The explanations for Herakleios' successes "by the help of the Theotokos" are strikingly similar to the "by the victory of the cross" language that characterized Constantine. Herakleios needed to preserve the True Cross by moving it from Jerusalem, where Constantine's mother Helena had discovered it. Parallels between the successes of the two reigns invite a comparison between their

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43   MS 435–36 / dB 303–4.
44   MS 437 / dB 306.
45   MS 446–49 / dB 315–18.
46   MS 455 / dB 327.
47   MS 458–59 / dB 328.
48   1 Chronicles 13: 1–8.
49   MS 457 / dB 327–28.

errors. As Constantine had eroded his victories by acquiescing to deceptive priests, Herakleios was also deceived. Herakleios, unlike Constantine, would see what his deception wrought.

The entry for AM 6121 begins a different narrative sequence. The entries for **AM 6121** (on monotheletism) and for **AM 6122** (on the prophet Muhammed) convey extended historical narratives in entries labelled as only one year. By placing these wide-ranging entries adjacent to one another, the *Chronographia* created chronological dissonances which it resolved with causal links between the two narratives.

This two-entry set piece of AM 6121–AM 6122 is introduced by an aside at the conclusion of the entry under **AM 6116** in *PG 1710*:

> [The Persian queen Borane] was succeeded by Hormisdas, who was driven out by the Saracens, and so the kingdom of Persia has remained under Arab sway *to the present time*.[50]

As we will see, the description of the rise of monotheletism in **AM 6121** would connect the heresy to the life of Muhammed and the conquests of his successors in **AM 6122** not through a strict chronology of events but through causal connections that could only be demonstrated by breaking the bounds of a strict chronology.

Furthermore, the *Chronicle* would emphasize these two disunifying ends by making use of a narrative technique known as *hysteron proteron*, a device used in Greek literature as far back as Homer in which the narration of events is given out of chronological order for the purpose of creating logical coherence.[51] The *Chronicle's* ambitious use of this classical technique is a rarity in the genre of medieval chronography and thereby a signal of the work's narrative concerns. In the case of **AM 6121**, *hysteron proteron* made it possible to tie an act in the middle of Herakleios' reign to the end of his successor's. In the entry for AM 6121, without stating any date incorrectly, the *Chronicle* telescoped fifty-one years of ecclesiastical and military events across the Mediterranean into one entry.

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50   Emphasis mine. MS 459 / dB 329.

51   See the succinct and clarifying discussion in Herbert C. Nutting, "Hysteron Proteron," *Classical Journal* 11, no. 5 (1916): 298–301. The technique involves events placed out of order chronologically for the purpose of increased logical coherence. In Elizabeth Minchin, "How Homeric Is *Hysteron Proteron*?," *Mnemosyne* 54, no. 6 (2001): 635–45, especially 639, the device is described as following the conversational logic of "agreement and contiguity."

According to its heading, AM 6121 (AD 628/9) covers only the eighteenth year of Herakleios' reign (610–641). However, the contents go far beyond even the bounds of the next entry of AM 6122. AM 6121 began by following up on Herakleios' bringing of the True Cross to Jerusalem. While still in that city, Herakleios was paid a fateful visit:

> In this year Athanasius the Patriarch of the Jacobites came to the Emperor Herakleios while he was in Hierapolis. He was a tricky man, and an evil-doer because of his innate Syrian knavery ...[52]

This Athanasius, a rival to the imperially sanctioned patriarch of Jerusalem Zacharias, convinced Herakleios of the truth of the new christological hypothesis monotheletism.[53] The unwary emperor was convinced, and so appointed Pyrrhos as patriarch of Constantinople to join him in promoting monotheletism.[54] The *Chronicle* signalled the ruin to follow:

> These matters having followed such a course, the Council of Chalcedon and the catholic faith fell into great disrespect ...

After returning from Jerusalem, Herakleios published his so-called *Edict* promoting monotheletism, despite being chastised for his theological opinions by Sophronios of Jerusalem and Sergius of Rome.

> When Herakleios had heard of this, he felt ashamed; on the one hand, he did not wish to cancel his own actions, while on the other he could not suffer the reproach.[55]

That is, Herakleios' behavior followed the definition of heretical (as opposed to simply erroneous) thinking which we saw established earlier in the case of Eusebius of Caesarea: he persisted in his opinion despite being confronted with its error.

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52   MS 460 / dB 329.

53   The proposal attempted to solve the problems that arose from the definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451)—which held that Christ had two natures but one person—by asserting that Christ nevertheless had only one will (μόνον-θέλημα). See: Timothy E. Gregory, *ODB* s.v. "Monotheletism."

54   In an aside George emphasized how poor the choice was, for Pyrrhos would conspire with the empress to murder Heraclius's first heir Constantine.

55   MS 461 / dB 330.

Thus, this entry began by emphasizing that at the very moment Herakleios restored order in Jerusalem he was persuaded to adopt the theological proposition of monotheletism. The rest of the entry would focus on the results of this decision by showing the empire descend into a series of crises. The result was to associate Herakleios' impiety and meddling in ecclesiastical affairs with the rise of a rival empire, with a decisive rupture among the churches over a christological heresy, and ultimately with the persecution of the Roman people and the downfall of his dynasty. By linking these disparate events the *Chronicle* proposed to its readers that emperors who intervened in Church governance and doctrinal disputes did so at the peril of their dynasty and at the risk of the dissolution of church and empire.

But the entry is far from done at this point. The *Chronicle* did not leave Herakleios and Pyrrhos' monotheletism here but sped ahead with a narrative of the entire theological controversy which encompassed the entire reign of Constans. Thus as the entry for AM 6121 continued, Pope John and Maximus the Confessor would meet with Pyrrhos; Pyrrhos would appear to repent but in reality persist in his adherence to monotheletism; John's successor Theodore would condemn Pyrrhos at a Lateran council by writing out an anathema in the actual eucharistic blood of Christ, dripping the wine of Holy Communion into his ink; and, when Martin succeeded Theodore he, along with Maximus the Confessor, would again condemn the monotheletes at the Lateran synod of 649. By this time Herakleios had passed away but his successor Constans II would decide he had heard enough from the papacy. Constans would capture, imprison, and exile Pope Martin, and maim Maximus the Confessor. The narrative concluded with Pope Agathon restoring order by condemning the entire sequence. This is all contained in the one entry for AM 6121.

3.2   *The Successor Type Is Corrupted: Constans II*

It was only after describing how these four papal condemnations of monotheletism came about that the *Chronicle* would turn to the following entry, AM 6122, where the theme would be the military consequences of monotheletism. This conclusion thus introduced the narrative trajectory to be pursued from the midpoint of Herakleios' reign in AM 6121 through to the entry for AM 6160 at the death of Constans. Before returning to the strictly chronological sequence of events, however, the *Chronicle* made it clear that it was Herakleios' persistent adherence to monotheletism which was the cause of not only disunity and division between the eastern and western empires but also the cause of military defeats. This explanation falls at the end of AM 6121 as a transition into AM 6122:

> And while the Church at that time was being troubled thus by emperors and impious priests, Amalek rose up in the desert, smiting us, the people of Christ, and there suffered the first terrible downfall of the Roman army … the devastation of all Christian peoples and lands, which did not cease until the persecutor of the Church had been miserably slain in Sicily.[56]

The allusion to "Amalek" clearly refers to the Arab conquests and in so doing makes the monotheletism of Herakleios their cause.[57] The goal was to show how the deception of Herakleios led straight into the beginning of AM 6122 (AD 629/30). Though "in this year died Muhammed, the Saracen's ruler and false prophet,"[58] his followers would immediately achieve military success at the expense of the Romans. Rome had lost the right to the victories which the Cross and the Mother of God had given.

The disunity of the empire, signaled in AM 6121 as ecclesiastical disunity, would come to fruition through the reign of Constans, the emperor who sought to change the seat of empire. This political disunity mirrored the disunity in belief. In AM 6146 (653/4) Constans was so struck with fear while facing the ʿUmayyad navy led by the general (later Caliph) Muʿāwiya that he attempted to transfer the empire's capital back to Rome in AM 6153 (660/1). When Constans was murdered in AM 6160 (667/8) the *Chronicle* explained that he was "hated by the people of Byzantium" for his persecution of Pope Martin and St. Maximus the Confessor *and* he was "greatly hated by all [for], it was out of fright that he intended to transfer the seat of the Empire to Rome."[59]

The passage quoted above set up these connections by setting up chronological conjunctions. In the above statement that Constans would continue his father's monotheletism, the connection to the Arab conquests was made explicit:

> *While* the church at that time was being troubled thus by emperors and impious priests, Amalek rose up in the desert, smiting us, the people of Christ.

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56 MS 462 / dB 332.
57 See the recent discussion of another use of this pejorative in Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium During the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, BBOS 13 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 83–87.
58 MS 464 / dB 333.
59 MS 490 / dB 351.

The *Chronicle* also tied all of this back into Constans' pursuit of a newly split empire, for "the devastation of all Christian peoples and lands ... did not cease until the persecutor of the Church [Constans II] had been miserably slain in Sicily."[60] It was in this way that the *Chronicle* argued monotheletism's grip on the empire had coincided with the advent and expansion of Islam. The use of *hysteron proteron* made sense of the Arab expansion that followed Herakleios' restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem. The *Chronicle* argued that the military defeats during and after Herakleios were all linked to his monotheletism, and thereby painted picture of a political ethic: imperial heresy had political and fiscal consequences which shattered the unity of church and of empire.

Though the entry for AM 6121 flagrantly broke the chronological bounds of that year (AD 628), it also constantly indicated the correct chronology to readers throughout.[61] This telling of events is thus not evidence of confusion on the part of the chronographer, but of craft. It permits the *Chronicle* to indicate two different ends or consequences for Herakleios' interests in monotheletism, both of which brought about disunity. This is much more than simply allowing the progression of history to speak for itself, of simply placing events under dates. The entire single-entry sequence carefully presents a causal connection between events by signaling a close connection between Herakleios' meddling in ecclesiastical affairs, the resulting rupture in the harmony of the catholic church, the downfall of his family, and the rise of the Arabs. The key point about the reign of Herakleios could not be made by adhering to annalistic chronography but is unmistakable in *PG 1710*'s narrative structure.

The meaning of all this is made clear by seeing how Herakleios fulfilled the imperial type established by Constantine the Great. Previous discussions of the account of the reign of Constantine in the *Chronicle* have not missed the fact that Constantine was not uniformly good.[62] But because they have followed the portrait made of him in the later Greek recensions, they have missed the point of the version of the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710*, to emphasize one specific, particular fault and that fault alone. Other recensions admit of Constantine's

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60   MS 462 / dB 332.

61   George the Synkellos noted that the Lateran synod convened by Pope Martin and led by Maximus the Confessor, was "in the 9th year of Constans, grandson of Heraklios, indiction 8." MS 462 / dB 332. As with the story of Charlemagne's coronation, when later in the *Chronicle* George came to the entry for the year in which the council did occur, AM 6141 (AD 649), he provided a second more abbreviated description: "In the same year a council was held in Rome by Pope Martin against the Monotheletes." MS 479 / dB 344.

62   Scott, "Image of Constantine."

"pagan" marriage practices, make his personal relationship with Eusebius of Nicomedia long-standing, and relate that to the controversy over his baptism. However, Constantine in *PG 1710* established a type of imperial rule that permitted of one very specific corruption: he had doubted Athanasios. This had allowed the Arians into his counsels, and so the palace, and because Constantine entrusted them with the enactment of his will, he exposed his successors to empire-dividing corruption.

I have argued that while the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* very carefully crafted its image of Constantine to be uniformly good with no question of fault or error right up until the very last entry of his reign (**AM 5827**), at that moment Constantine made a fatal mistake in finally allowing "impious priests" to have positions of authority in his government, and so brought about the heretical reign of his son, which turned out to be a disaster for the empire. Herakleios capitulating to heresy at the end of his reign and his son's subsequent following in those footsteps is thus exactly in the image of Constantine and Constantius, with the only difference being that Herakleios capitulated even earlier, well before the end of his reign. As we move into the third instance of this type, the father-son pair of Leo III and Constantine V, I will show that, contrary to the current scholarly consensus, the *Chronicle* did not focus its castigation of these emperors on their iconoclast doctrine but rather structured its narrative and commentary to display them as an even more profound corruption of the father-son imperial type. In this typology emperors who succumbed to heresy and heretics opened the way for the truly evil rulers to follow: their already-corrupted sons. As we will see with Constantine V, these sons are evil, but even they are in fact not the worst to come. They are only "forerunners to the Antichrist." For just as Constantius led the way to Julian, so Constantine V's primary evil was not in his iconoclasm but in his preparing the way to Nikephoros I. These forerunners to the Antichrist were evil for making the all-devouring greed of the true anti-Constantine possible.

4   The Antitype of the Progenitor-Successor Type: Leo III to Constantine V

4.1   *The Antitype of the Progenitor: Leo III*

The pattern or type of the deceived progenitor whose successor persists in his own wrong thinking and policies was established by Constantine-Constantius and worsened in Herakleios-Constans. The corruption of these types came to fulfillment in the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V. The narrative trajectory

leading up to the description of Leo III's reign in *PG 1710* proceeds as follows. The reign of Leo III, like Constantine and Herakleios, began with laudatory descriptions of Leo's military accomplishments, explicitly blessed by God. Like Herakleios, Leo engages in a major campaign in Armenia. Leo's herculean campaign actually occurs several years before he gains the throne. The story of that campaign is incorporated into a rapid series of events in which Philippikos (noted as heretical under **AM 6204**) is blinded[63] and though Artemios becomes emperor (AM 6206) he is unable to hold the throne due to opposition from the Opsikion theme (AM 6207).[64] And so Theodosios III, "an idle and ordinary fellow"[65] who "ran away and hid on a mountain, but they found him and acclaimed him emperor by force," gains the throne.[66] Leo remains loyal to Artemios and as his general, is occupied with the city of Amorion's successful negotiations with Souleiman (Masalmas' general). Leo just avoids being captured in an elaborate diplomatic ambush.[67] At the end of the entry, the patriarch Germanos brokers a promise of immunity for Theodosios III if he hands Leo III the empire.[68]

After this impressive preface, the first entry of Leo's own reign is begun in the now-established pattern of a header in the top margin of the relevant folio of *PG 1710*. Here, he is described as "Leo the Isaurian" (figure 5.4).
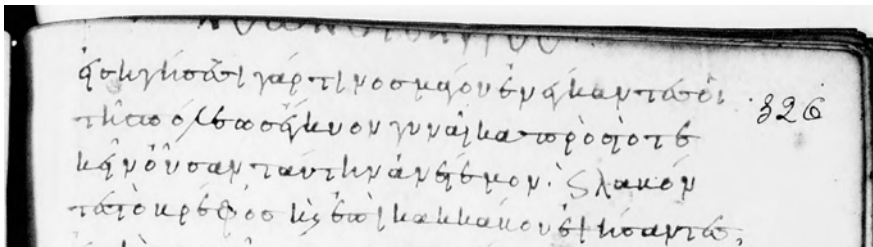
FIGURE 5.4   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 326r top margin: ΛΕΩΝ ʽΟ ΙСΑΥΡΟС (Leo the Isaurian)
            IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

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63   *PG 1710* still gives Philippikos a header on f. 316v.
64   *PG 1710* still gives Artemios a header on f. 318v.
65   Alternatively: "a private citizen who was fond of quiet" (ἀπράγμονά τε καὶ ἰδιώτην). See MS. 537n6.
66   MS 536 / dB 385 (AM 6207). *PG 1710* still gives Theodosios a header on f. 319r.
67   MS 538–40 / dB 386–90 (AM 6208).
68   MS 540 / dB 390 (AM 6208).

The reign of Leo III as presented in manuscript *PG 1710* is shown in table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5   Reign of Leo III in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
6209	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6209
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6210
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6211
6212	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6212
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6213
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6214
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6215
6216*	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6216
	– variance: In all Greek MSS (incl. *PG 1710*) this entry altered (see ch. 8)
	* AM number corrected from scribal error
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6217
	– variance: two lines absent (dB 404.10–11)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6218
	– variance: all of de Boor's 6219 absent (dB 407.2–3)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6220
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6221
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6222
	– variance: all of de Boor's 6223 absent (dB 409.27–28)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6224
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6225 and 6226
	– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
	– variance: all of de Boor's 6227 absent (dB 410.27–28)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6228
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6229
	– variance: all of de Boor's 6230 absent (dB 41.10–12)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6231
	– variance: two lines at end of entry absent (dB 411.26b–28)
In Leo's 24th year	– text in PG 1710 = de Boor's 6232
	– variance: first five lines of entry phrased differently (dB 412.2–7)

As table 5.5 shows, the reign of Leo III is divided into three narrative sections. The first section is focused on Leo's favorable beginning and ends with his deception. The initial entries under the section headed by **AM 6209** describe the emperor as being a "most pious" protector of Constantinople, favored by the intercessions of the Mother of God. In this way he is exactly in the type established by Herakleios. The narrative begins with Leo's backstory as *strategos* and the story of how his first year as emperor saw the siege of Constantinople in 717/718. This narrative emphasizes Leo's distinction from the emperor Justinian II (who received a thoroughly negative portrayal in the *Chronographia*), and his innocence from a contemporary rumor that he had sought to usurp the crown from Justinian II.[69] Leo's defense of the city is unabashedly praised. Indeed, Leo's defenses are supported by the divine, for "God brought [the invaders'] counsel to naught through the intercession of the all-pure Theotokos" and through the actions of "the pious emperor."[70] In fact, the protection of the Theotokos is emphasized three times in the entry, associating Leo's reign with her as strongly as had been allowed Herakleios.[71] The *Chronographia* emphasizes Leo's initial successes as God's chosen protector of empire and City.

However, by the last entry of this section Leo has undergone a Janus-like switch to being "the impious emperor."[72] The section makes sense of this switch by closing with the baptism of Leo's son Constantine, immediately identified as "the yet more impious Constantine, the forerunner to the Antichrist."[73] Rather than being distracted by whether the *Chronicle* has presented Leo as a coherent character in its quick switch from pious to impious, the text must be read in light of the imperial types already established. First, we saw that in the imperial type established by Constantine the Great, when that emperor had been deceived the *Chronicle* also withheld the adjective "pious" in his last entry. Second, Constantine's deception had occurred at the very end of his reign, and Herakleios' in the middle. With Leo III that deception occurs near the beginning. As the transformation of Constantine from stalwart to deceived

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69   MS 542 / dB 391 (AM 6209).

70   MS 545 / dB 396 (AM 6209).

71   MS 546 / dB 397–98 (AM 6209). This association continues into the next entry, see AM 6210 as in MS 550 / dB 399.

72   MS 551 / dB 399–400 (AM 6210).

73   "Forerunner to the Antichrist." No previous uses of this phrase in the *Chronographia* except Timothy the Cat (Alexandria), AM 5950–5951. He usurps the episcopal throne of Alexandria by sending men to seize patriarch Proterios from the baptistry; in fact the text implies the followers killed Proterios *in* the font, for "dragging his corpse with ropes, they hauled it from the holy font." MS 170 / dB 111 (AM 5950).

was sped up in the reign of Herakleios, the *Chronicle* here simply continues this acceleration: a "most pious" emperor becomes impious, the implications of which are personified in a heretical heir who will go on to undo the peace, prosperity, and unity of the empire. Third, this establishes the question that the subsequent section will pursue: how did Leo III become so "impious" that his and the empress Maria's time in power should be described as "their wicked reign"?[74]

The second narrative section, headlined by the notice for AM 6212, is quite short, taking up only one-and-a-half folios in the manuscript (ff. 337r–338v). This section answers the question just posed in exactly the way a reader who has understood the type of Constantine and Herakleios would expect: through deception by an outside "trickster" figure. Here too there is continuity in the type. Constantine had been deceived by the heretical bishop of Nikomedia, and Herakleios by a "cunning" Syrian bishop. Leo was deceived by a Syrian who had been persuaded of iconoclasm. The *Chronicle* attributes the ideas of this man, Beser, to his conversion to Islam. The text claims that Beser had been influenced by the Caliph Yazid's "general constitution against the holy images."[75] This decree was in turn inspired by a "Jewish *magus*" who had persuaded Yazid against holy images. Furthermore, the community of this Jewish *magus* had been convinced to accept iconoclast ideas by "a certain Syrian who was a false messiah."[76] In sum: Leo's deception was set up by a complex series of deceptions originating from a "cunning Syrian" in the trickster type already established.[77] In the narrative context, it becomes clear that this series is not so much about articulating the historical origins of iconoclasm as it is in following the typological figure already established by Herakleios and Constantine.

The portrait of Leo III is further molded to the type of Herakleios by noting that Leo undertook a forced conversion of Jews. While Herakleios' similar action seems to have been presented in a praiseworthy manner, Leo's attempt at forced conversion is described as a complete disaster and leads to those Jews defiling the sacrament.[78] Leo also attempted to force heretical Montanists to convert but they chose self-immolation instead.[79] This section explains that Leo passed from piety to gross impiety by repeating the very errors committed by Herakleios.

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74   MS 551 / dB 400.

75   MS 555 / dB 401–2 (AM 6215).

76   MS 554 / dB 401 (AM 6213).

77   Significant given the association of George's authorial persona with Syria.

78   MS 458–59 / dB 328–29 (AM 6120).

79   MS 554 / dB 401 (AM 6214).

The third section covers the remaining seventeen years of Leo III's reign, all grouped under the entry for **AM 6216**.[80] In this entry Leo demonstrates three characteristics of the type of the deceived progenitor. First, Leo not only personally adheres to a heretical set of ideas but, as Herakleios did with his *Edict*, he makes his own theological pronouncements about those ideas.[81] Second, Leo misinterprets how to respond to a natural disaster. Constantine's version of the progenitor type identified such a disaster, an earthquake, as an opportunity for generosity. Leo III instead uses a natural disaster to double down on his new ideas, reminding readers that the truly impious not only make errors but persist in them.[82] Finally, just as Herakleios achieved campaign victories until he adopted the heresy of monotheletism, once Leo adopted iconoclasm, he could not achieve victory and instead suffered invasions from the armies of the Arabs.[83]

The issues worth highlighting in this third section of **AM 6216** are not the historicity of the events therein but how this subsection of the narrative of Leo III's reign developed the type of the deceived emperor descending into impiety. Leo III's portrait would set up the terms of the truly impious reigns of Constantine V (his successor) and Nikephoros I by establishing the bad emperor, not primarily as a heretic, but as a greedy, all-devouring, insatiable lord of taxation.

The section begins by praising Pope Gregory not only for standing up to Leo III in terms of doctrine, but for withholding Italian revenue from the imperial coffers in Constantinople. Gregory "severed Rome, Italy, and all the western lands from civil and ecclesiastical subjection to Leo and the latter's

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80   The beginning of this entry contains an alteration to the original form of the *Chronicle*, a form now only preserved in the Latin translation of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Investigating this change can help us recover the political stakes in the *Chronographia* at the moment when it was written, an investigation I undertake in part in chapter 8. The alteration concerns where (or when) the *Chronographia* locates the flight of Pope Stephen to the Franks. The text itself lauds his flight for escaping a rapacious lord in Aistulph, King of the Lombards and praises the virtues of the Carolingian Pippin who received him. However, in the *ordering* in which it occurs in our manuscript, this flight makes no sense, coming at the head of the narrative of Leo III's descent into iconoclasm. As preserved in *PG 1710*, it implies that the Pope's flight caused the series of events that resulted in iconoclasm.

81   MS 558 / dB 404 (AM 6217).

82   MS 559 / dB 404–5 (AM 6218).

83   MS 560–61 / dB 405–6 (AM 6218) and dB 407 / MS 563 (AM 6220) and dB 409 / MS 567 (AM 6222) and dB 410 / MS 568 (AM 6224) and dB 410 / MS 570 (AM 6228) and dB 411 / MS 570 (AM 6229) and dB 411 / MS 571 (AM 6231). In later Greek recensions it seems that other entries are added in order to make this pattern complete, with additional invasions recorded for AM 6223, AM 6227, and AM 6230.

domain."[84] Leo then "imposed a capitation tax on one third of the people of Sicily and Calabria," responding to Gregory's secession by ordering that "the so-called Patrimonies of the holy chief apostles who are honoured in Elder Rome (these, amounting to three-and-a-half talents of gold, had been from olden times paid to the churches) ... be paid to the Public Treasury."[85]

In this entry, the text sets Pope Gregory II alongside Germanos, the patriarch of Constantinople at the time, as champions against Leo's evils:

> This holy and admirable man Germanos was prominent in defending pious doctrine in Byzantium and fought the wild beast Leo (fitly so named) and the latter's supporters; while in the Elder Rome it was Gregory, that most holy and apostolic man, enthroned next to Peter the chief apostle, who shone forth in word and deed and who severed Rome, Italy, and all the western lands from civil and ecclesiastical subjection to Leo and the latter's domain.[86]

Gregory's piety is primarily manifest in his opposition to Leo's tax policy rather than through his devotion to icons. The issue of iconoclasm is only obliquely referred to with the phrase "pious doctrine" and later in the entry when Leo responds to Pope Gregory's independence icons do not feature. Both Leo's evil and Gregory's goodness are manifest in the concerns of taxation and administrative jurisdiction.

The last entry on Leo III, labelled his **24th Year**, turns his portrait into a full inversion of the type set up by Constantine. Constantine had responded to natural disasters with generosity to his people. Leo instead used disaster to enrich his treasury. When "a violent and fearful earthquake occurred at Constantinople" Leo used the occasion to institute a new tax that would never go away. Leo claims:

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84 MS 564–65 /dB 408 (AM 6221). Note that the claim, though historians have identified it to be historically false (Jean-Marie Mayeur et al., eds., *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol. 4, *Évêques, moines et empereurs (610–1054)* [Paris: Desclée, 1993], 652–55), is repeated twice in the same entry (again at: MS 565 /dB 409).

85 MS 568 / dB 410 (AM 6224). This entry contains a note about Leo bringing back the type of Pharaoh which will be addressed in chapter 7's analysis of the portrait of Nikephoros I.

86 καὶ ἐν μὲν τῷ Βυζαντίῳ πρόμαχος τῶν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας δογμάτων ὁ ἱερὸς οὗτος καὶ θεσπέσιος ἤκμαζε Γερμανὸς θηριομαχῶν πρὸς τὸν φερώνυμον Λέοντα καὶ τοὺς αὐτοῦ συνασπιστάς, ἐν δὲ τῇ πρεσβυτέρᾳ Ῥώμῃ Γρηγόριος, ὁ πανίερος ἀποστολικὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ Πέτρου τοῦ κορυφαίου σύνθρονος, λόγῳ καὶ πράξει διαλάμπων, ὃς ἀπέστησε Ῥώμην τε καὶ Ἰταλίαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἑσπέρια τῆς τε πολιτικῆς καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὑπακοῆς Λέοντος καὶ τῆς ὑπ' αὐτὸν βασιλείας. MS 564–65 / dB 408 (AM 6221 [AD 728/9]).

'You do not have the means to build the walls, so we have given orders to the tax collectors to exact according to the register one additional *miliaresion* for every gold piece. The imperial government will collect that and build the walls.' So started the custom of paying two extra *keratia* to the tax gatherers.[87]

The chronographer introduces a rare instance of his own editorial voice and so makes sure, as he concludes the section on Leo III, that the audience see the conjunction between greedy taxation and heresy:

I have related in the preceding sections (κεφάλαια) the evils that befell the Christians at the time of the impious (ἀσεβής) Leo *both* as regards the orthodox faith *and* the civil administration—the latter in Sicily, Calabria, and Crete—for dishonest gain and avarice (φιλαργυρία); and, furthermore, the secession of Italy because of his evil doctrine, the earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and foreign insurrections (not to mention all the details).[88]

The image of Leo III is both the fulfillment and antitype of the portrait of Constantine I. Leo connects the Constantinian turn towards impiety with an un-Constantinian greediness as the text moves into the reign of Leo's successor, the "forerunner to the Antichrist." While foreign invasions and natural disasters are primarily attributed to Leo's impiety, Leo's administrative and fiscal policies are an inseparable part of his "evil doctrine." Prior to the passage just cited (AM 6232) Leo's fiscal policy came to dominate the narrative of his reign for Sicily, Calabria, and Crete all suffered from a "civil administration" devoted to "dishonest gain and avarice." The narrative pattern established by Constantine and Herakleios is concluded when the emperor is deceived by heresy, the antitype manifesting imperial disunity through the onset of invasion and the assessment of heavy taxation.[89]

   This final entry on Leo III's **24th Year** serves as a coda and transition in the narrative of the *Chronicle* as a whole. The entry is one of only two in the entire *PG 1710* manuscript that do not begin with either an *annus mundi* year

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87   MS 572 / dB 412 (AM 6232).

88   MS 573 / dB 413 (AM 6232). Translation slightly altered and rearranged to reflect the word order in Greek. Emphasis mine.

89   See: Angeliki E. Laiou, "Law, Justice, and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries," in *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 151–86.

or an "In this year" heading. The previous entry's description of an invasion by Souleiman is followed by an account of an earthquake which would reveal the eschatological nature of the age.[90] This concluding entry on Leo III ends with the literal collapse of positive imperial images and types:

> There also fell down the statue of Constantine the Great
> that stood above the gate of Atalos as well as that of Atalos himself,
> the statue of Arkadios that stood on the column of Xerolophos,
> and the statue of Theodosius the Great above the Golden Gate.[91]

These three emperors are among the *Chronicle*'s good emperors. Constantine has already been discussed at length. Theodosius I ("the Great")—and through him his son Arkadios—represent the dynasty that produces the *Chronicle*'s model paradigms (to be discussed via the portrait of the reign of Theodosios II in chapter 6).

4.2   *The Antitype of the Successor: Constantine V*

The account of Constantine V began during his father Leo III's reign. Constantine's baptism not only interrupted the account of his father's reign but was the occasion to declare Leo no longer a "pious emperor" aided by the Theotokos, but an "impious emperor" who turned Rome into his own "wicked empire."[92] At the point where Constantine V is introduced during the reign of his father Leo III, the *Chronicle* anticipates his literary role as an antitype by crafting his image as the antitype of Christ's cousin, John "the Baptist" or "Forerunner." John earned the epithet "forerunner" (πρόδρομος) for his mission to "prepare the way of the Lord" by calling his fellow Jews to repentance through baptism. John would then baptize Christ himself to initiate Christ's preaching. Constantine V was made into an inversion of John's function in the following manner.

In a well-known story, the *Chronicle* describes Constantine as the "forerunner of the Antichrist" (τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου πρόδρομος).[93] Christians had long instituted John's ritual baptism as the sign of initiation into the sect.

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90   "In this year, the twenty-fourth year of the reign of the lawless tyrant" … "a violent and fearful earthquake occurred at Constantinople on 26 October, indiction 9, a Wednesday, in the 8th hour." MS 572 / dB 412 (AM 6232).

91   MS 572 / dB 412 (AM 6232).

92   MS 551 / dB 399–400 (AM 6211).

93   "… a son was born to the impious emperor Leo, namely the yet more impious Constantine, the precursor of the Antichrist (τοῦ Ἀντιχρίστου πρόδρομος)." MS 551 / dB 399–400 (AM 6211 [AD 717/8]).
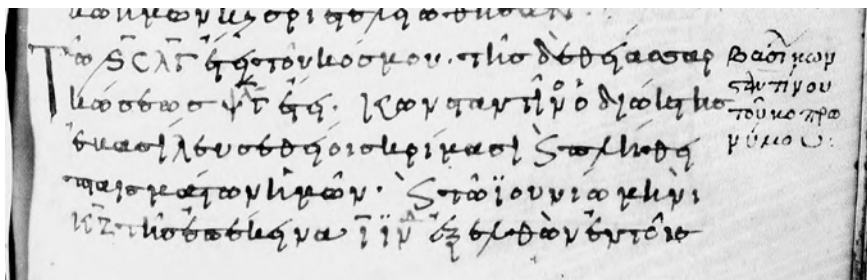
FIGURE 5.5   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 349r marginal note: βασιλ[εία] κωνσταντίνου τοῦ
κοπρωνύμου (reign of Constantine the dung-name)
IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

Constantine V's baptism desecrated and corrupted this holy ritual. The anecdote holds that on the feast of Christ's birth, 25 December AM 6211 (718), when the infant Constantine was baptized "a terrible and evil-smelling sign was manifested in his very infancy, for he defecated in the holy font."[94] Rather than blessing the waters, Constantine corrupted them, violating the sacrament. By being the antitype of the Forerunner to the Christ, Constantine became the Forerunner to the Antichrist.

The famous epithet that history would remember Constantine by as a result of this incident is not found in the text proper but in a later marginal note in *PG 1710*, which functions as a gloss on the story told in the text. Though it has been impossible to obtain a color image of this folio to demonstrate the point, this marginal notation was written in red ink by an individual whom I would describe as the manuscript's Rubricator (for another example for which I do have a color image see *PG 1710* f. 371v reproduced in chapter 6 section 3). It is one of (by my count) thirty-four such notes, all in the same striking color. The script of this note is an early minuscule script but one that uses different ligatures than the primary scribal hand. The note turns the anecdote about Constantine V's defecation in the font into that emperor's christened eponym: "dung-name" (κοπρώνυμος).[95]

The *Chronicle* signals the turn it will make in its portrait of Constantine V in the final entry on Leo III. After a dating summary and the short rehearsal of Leo's evils (quoted in section 4.1 above), the *Chronicle* provides a preface to the reign of Constantine V:

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94   δεινόν τι καὶ δυσῶδες ἐκ νηπιότητος αὐτοῦ προεσήμανται τεκμήριον, ἀφοδεύσαντος αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ
ἁγίᾳ κολυμβήθρᾳ, ὥς φασιν οἱ ἀκριβῶς αὐτόπται γεγονότες. MS: 551–52 / dB 400 (AM 6211). As
a result of this story Constantine V gained the nickname κοπρονύμος—"dung-name"—as
though christened by his childhood accident itself.

95   See: MS 551–52 / dB 400 (AM 6211).

> It is now proper to review in succession the lawless deeds, yea, even more sacrilegious and abhorred by God, of [Leo's] most impious (δυσσεβεστά-τος) and altogether wretched son—yet to do so objectively (inasmuch as all seeing God is observing us) for the benefit of posterity and of those wretched and wicked men who still follow the abominable heresy of that criminal—namely by recounting his impious actions from the 10th indiction, the first year of his reign, until the 14th indiction, the year of his damnation.[96]

Constantine V's portrait was the fulfillment of the "impious successor" type of Constantius and Constans. It also anticipated the antitype of the good emperor, Nikephoros I: Constantine V's imperial sin of deception by heresy setting up Nikephoros' greater sin of greed.

Though I have argued scholars have over-emphasized the role of Constantine V's iconoclasm in the *Chronicle*'s polemical goals, this is not to argue that the iconoclasm of Constantine is unimportant. Rather, I wish to make clear that the *Chronicle* does not present iconoclasm as the sum, the worst of all possible evils. Constantine V is the "forerunner" to Nikephoros as his sin of heresy is the set-up to the sin of greed.

The second point I wish to emphasize is that Constantine V's portrait is both the fulfillment of the "successor" type that we have been tracing, and at the same time serves as the prototype or pattern for the markers of Nikephoros' evils. This is signalled by the *Chronicle*'s praise of a rebellion against Constantine V early in his reign.

> And when [Constantine V] took over both his father's dominion and his wickedness, need one explain how great an evil he straight away kindled and fanned into a conspicuous flame that rose up into the air?
>
> When the Christians saw these things they were seized by great despondency, so that everyone immediately hated him for his effrontery and took up the cause of his brother in law (by his sister Anna), Artabasdos, the *curopalates* and *comes* of Opsikion, with a view to giving him the Empire inasmuch as he was orthodox.

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96 MS 573 /dB 413 (AM 6232). The text continues: "Now this pernicious, crazed, bloodthirsty, and most savage beast, who seized power by illegal usurpation, from the very start parted company from our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, His pure and all holy Mother and all the saints; led astray as he was by magic, licentiousness, bloody sacrifices, by the dung and urine of horses and delighting in impurity and the invocation of demons. In a word, he was reared from early youth in all soul destroying pursuits."
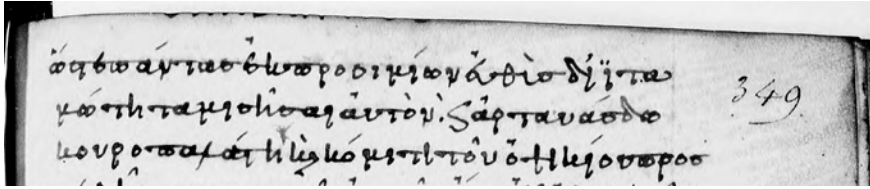
FIGURE 5.6 Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 349r top margin: traces of likely "Constantine" header
IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

As we will see, the *Chronicle* will again frame rebels against imperial antitypes as praiseworthy in its account of the reign of Nikephoros I.

As with all previous emperors, Constantine V's reign is divided into set pieces with coherent narrative structure. First, though heavily cropped, it is possible to make out that there was originally a header in *PG 1710* to mark the start of Constantine's reign (figure 5.6).

The reign of Constantine V in the *Chronographia* proceeds as shown in table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6 Reign of Constantine V in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
6233	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6233
	– variance: first and last two lines of entry differ (dB 414.16–18; 415.29–30)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6234
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6235
6236	– Text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6236
In this year ...	– Undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6237
In this year ...	– Undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6238

LACUNA in *PG 1710*: AM 6239–AM 6258 (dB 423.8–440.8)

6256* (AM notification posited on the basis of *Wake Greek 5*)	
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6259
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6260
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6261
	– variance: phrase missing at entry end (dB 444.25b)

TABLE 5.6   Reign of Constantine V in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (*cont.*)

Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6262
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6263
	– variance: all of de Boor's 6264 absent (dB 446.17–25)
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6265
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6266
In this year ...	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 6267

The first part of Constantine V's reign, beginning with **AM 6233**, frames Constantine as a usurper. For the first three years after the death of his father, Constantine had to fight to reclaim the capital. Constantinople had been taken and held by Artabasdos, whom the *Chronicle* frames as eminently pious and of whom it offers a strongly supportive portrait. When Constantine does finally gain the victory, the *Chronicle* relates the location of Artabasdos' burial at the Chora monastery in order to tell how much later Constantine would, in a rage, dig up Artabasdos' corpse in order to desecrate it. The theme of this narrative section is the disunity to empire that the impious emperor Constantine V brought, at the prompting of Satan himself:

> The Devil, instigator of evil, roused in those days such fury and mutual slaughter among Christians that sons would murder their fathers without any mercy and brothers would murder their own brothers and pitilessly burn each other's houses and homes.

This summation is the conclusion to this first narrative section, and the beginning of Constantine V's unchallenged reign from the palace at Constantinople. Constantine's provocation of Christian violence against Christians also continues to establish the negative paradigm or antitype that we will see fulfilled in the reign of Nikephoros I.

The second narrative section, headed by **AM 6236**, portrays the subsequent twenty years of Constantine's reign. It covers the establishment of the heretical doctrine of iconoclasm and the consequences of Constantine's success in promoting iconoclasm. In this section Constantine is given the prime characteristic of a heretic—unrepentance—and in so doing compared implicitly to the

Chronicle's initial heretical opponent Eusebius, and explicitly to the Egyptian Pharaoh who held the Israelites in captivity.[97] The Pharaonic type of the ruler opposed to God will be fulfilled in the description of Nikephoros' Ten Evils.

In this section Constantine convenes his famous Heireia council, which in 754 established and defended the doctrine of iconoclasm.[98] The *Chronicle* notes its adherents as "enemies of the Theotokos," recalling how in contrast Herakleios' successes and even Leo III's survival of the siege of 717/18 had been attributed to the aid of the Theotokos.[99] Then, in the last entry of this section, the patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria (at this point all outside of the empire) convened an opposing council which declares in *favor* of icons being used in worship.[100] The description of this event does not merely show one council in favor of icons, another against. Rather, Constantine's calling of the council of Heireia completes the refashioning—begun by Leo III—of the empire in the image of impiety. Additionally, Constantine is attributed with moving heretical populations into the core regions of the empire, including into Constantinople.[101] The lines are stark: bishops who would remain orthodox must do so outside of the empire. The transformation of Rome from a Christian empire into a Christian-persecuting state is the undoing of the work of Constantine I, and an anticipation of later actions by Nikephoros I. The key to the narrative arc of this section is the way that its final entry closes.

> In the same year, in the month of March the stars were seen falling from heaven all at once, so that all the observers thought it was the end of the present world (τὴν τοῦ παρόντος αἰῶνος … συντέλειαν).[102]

Here the *Chronicle* connects Constantine's fulfillment of the type of the impious successor with his preparing the way for the All-Devourer by explicitly stating that his era came to resemble the end of the world.

The passage prior to the above quotation is well known to scholars. It contains a description of a severely cold winter that saw icebergs flowing through the Bosporos past the walls of Constantinople.[103] This passage is usually used in isolation to discuss the authorship of the *Chronicle* (since the chronographer

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97   MS 585 / dB 423 (AM 6238).

98   MS 591–92 / dB 427–28 (AM 6245).

99   MS 591 / dB 428 (AM 6245).

100   MS 600 / dB 433–34 (AM 6255).

101   MS 584 / dB 422 (AM 6237) and MS 593 / dB 429 (AM 6247). This should also be seen as of a piece with the persecutions of Christians enacted by "Abdelas" (al-Mansūr, r. 754–775). The orthodox have nowhere to go.

102   MS 601 / dB 435 (AM 6255).

103   MS 600–601 / dB 434–35 (AM 6255).

claims to have witnessed and even played on these icebergs as a child), or climate change. However, in its literary context it must be understood as framing this period of Constantine's reign as an undoing of the days of Creation. The falling of the stars is an undoing of the work of the fourth day—in traditional chronological thinking the day that marked the beginning of time itself. Furthermore, the freezing of the coast of the Black Sea is described as meaning "the sea became indistinguishable from land," in other words an undoing the work of the third day of creation.[104]

The *Chronicle* tells of Constantine's refashioning of an Empire blessed and fashioned by God to the point that Creation itself unraveled. The effect is to provoke the Romans to profound lamentation and then silence: "All the inhabitants of the City, men, women, and children, ceaselessly watched these things and would return home with lamentation and tears, not knowing what to say."[105] The section concludes by setting the tone for what follows. Constantine V asks what it would mean to deny the Mother of God her title as such. He is counseled against it, but in Constantine's final years he more and more stridently opposes the very order of heaven, the saints, and especially the Mother of God. In this, Constantine opposes the divine aid that had brought Herakleios to the throne and characterized his father Leo III's "pious" period.

In the last entries for Constantine V there is a second lacuna in *PG 1710*. **AM 6256** must have been this section's beginning since other manuscripts note only this *annus mundi* for the rest of Constantine's reign. Early on in this section the *Chronicle* concludes a litany of complaints against Constantine V by inverting the final sentence of the Gospel according to John. Instead of the apostle's statement that he cannot tell all the life of Christ—"there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written"[106]—the *Chronicle* states:

> [Constantine V] appointed several *strategoi* who shared his views and were suitable perpetrators of his wickedness ... Who would be able to recount their sacrilegious deeds ... For if one were to set down all the deeds they committed to win the emperor's favour, it is fair to say with the Gospel that the whole world would not contain the books that should be written concerning them.[107]

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104   MS 600 / dB 434 (AM 6255).

105   MS 601 / dB 435 (AM 6255).

106   Gospel according to John 21:25.

107   προβάλλεται στρατηγοὺς ὁμόφρονας αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς κακίας αὐτοῦ ἐπαξίους ἐργάτας, ... Μιχαὴλ μὲν τὸν Μελισσηνὸν ἐν τῷ θέματι ... καὶ τίς ἱκανὸς διηγεῖσθαι τὰ τούτων ἀνοσιουργήματα ... πάντα γὰρ κατὰ μέρος συγγράφειν τὰ τούτων ἔργα πρὸς θεραπείαν τοῦ κρατοῦντος γινόμενα

Whereas Christ had performed an infinite number of miraculous deeds, Constantine prompted an incalculable amount of sycophancy and corruption. The *Chronicle* is not subtle in making him an antitype of Christ. As the reign of Constantine progressed, previously subtle or typological intimations of the end of days are made more and more explicit. After Constantine had secured the empire for himself his behavior was compared to arch-antagonists from the history of the Jewish people: he possessed Pharaoh's stubbornness[108] and King Ahab's mania for the persecution of priests.[109]

Three things characterize the entries of this final section and solidify the image of Constantine v as the forerunner to the Antichrist. First, the initial entries after AM 6256 emphasize how Constantine increased persecutions against the iconophiles, or actively encouraged those who were persecuting them.[110] This narrative then transitions into Constantine's failures to defeat the Bulgars. It is clear that the *Chronicle* worked to turn what must have been successful campaigns into cause for derision (modern historians consider Constantine an effective military commander).[111] An instance when Constantine clearly defeated the Bulgars in AD 773 is sarcastically summed up as, "[Constantine] called this war a 'noble war' inasmuch as he had met with no resistance and there had been no slaughter or shedding of Christian blood."[112] This reframing makes Constantine v into the antitype of Constantine I, whose piety had resulted in military victories.[113]

We can now see that the *Chronicle* presents similarities between the reign of Leo III, Herakleios, and Constantine I. Early in the reign of Leo III he is described in a positive light. In this way Leo follows the image of Constantine. As such he is not without good qualities, and it is possible that he too could

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οὐδ' αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρήσειν τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία, εὐαγγελικῶς εἰπεῖν οἰκειότερον. MS 608 / dB 440–41 (AM 6258).

108   MS 585 / dB 423 (AM 6238 [AD 745/6]).

109   MS 607 / dB 439 (AM 6258 [AD 765/6]).

110   Most especially the *strategos* Michael Lachanodrakon: MS 615 / dB 445–46 (AM 6263).

111   Marie-France Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 251–91.

112   MS 617 / dB 447 (AM 6265).

113   See AM 6256 and 6257 for the beginning of Constantine v's losses. In AM 6256 he is portrayed as overly fearful of Bulgaria, returning from a campaign without doing "any brave deed." Then immediately in AM 6257 he begins to persecute. Note, that it is not specifically against the icons, but it is explained as generally against Christians: "In this year, on 20 November of the 4th indiction, the impious and unholy emperor, becoming enraged at all God-fearing people, commanded that Stephen, the new Protomartyr ... should be dragged in the street." MS 604 /dB 426–437 (AM 6257). The imperial antitype is fulfilled by making Constantine v into a Constans-like progression from bad to fully evil.

be saved or redeemed. Just as Constantine and Herakleios had been deceived by the antitypes of good priests, so Leo III was deceived by churchmen with ill intent. These moments of deception followed a pattern. Constantine was deceived by churchmen from Alexandria and Nicomedia, Herakleios was deceived by a schismatic Syrian bishop, and Leo was deceived by a Jewish "magician."[114]

On the other hand, Constantine V's impiety is more detestable. It is continually connected to denial of his spiritual mother, the Virgin Mary.[115] The section from AM 6236 had ended with Constantine wondering about the possibility of denying the doctrine that Mary had birthed God. Similarly, the last entry of his reign returns to the question. Where Constantine I had finally caved to heresy in his last days, Constantine V here attempts to return to piety on his deathbed, calling out for prayers to the Mother of God—"whose implacable enemy he had been"—to be offered on his behalf.[116] The *Chronicle* would have none of it, claiming that Constantine V was experiencing his entrance into the afterlife prematurely:

> "I have been delivered to the unquenchable fire while still alive!" ... Thus he ended his life, polluted as he was with much Christian blood, with the invocation of demons to whom he sacrificed.... in all manner of evil he had reached a pinnacle no less than Diocletian and the ancient tyrants.[117]

This conclusion to the reign of the forerunner of the Antichrist explicitly evokes the types of Diocletian and Julian noted at the beginning of this chapter. Those imperial types persecuted Christians and were characterized by the sin of greed: never generous, they desired to wring everything they could out of their subjects. Constantine V, in imitation of Diocletian and Julian, showed himself to be a "New Midas."[118]

In order to make him fulfill the deceived Progenitor-Successor type, the *Chronicle* crafts a portrait of Constantine V as the forerunner to the Antichrist.

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114   The story of the rise of iconoclasm under Leo III in the *Chronographia* has given rise to endless debates about the role of Jews and "Saracens." What has not been mentioned is the influence of the literary trope that was established over the course of the *Chronicle*. While there are certainly degrees of veracity in the stories it is difficult to adjudicate since the trope *demanded* this type appear. For the classic account, see: Stephen Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III: With Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources*, CSCO 346, Subsidia 41 (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1973).

115   MS 607 / dB 439 (AM 6258) and MS 610 / dB 442 (AM 6259) and MS 619 / dB 448 (AM 6267).

116   MS 619 / dB 448 (AM 6267).

117   MS 619 / dB 448 (AM 6267).

118   MS 611 / dB 443 (AM 6259).

By fulfilling the seeds of corruption sewn by Constantine I, Constantine V also undermines the original type of the good emperor. Perhaps the most rhetorically significant aspect of this progression is the intertextuality between the imperial portraits in the *Chronicle*, the echoes and cross-references that give these portraits their meaning and convey to readers how to understand the text. This affirms M.-F. Auzépy's claim that we have allowed the rhetoric of our iconophile sources to overly dominate our accounts of the period.[119] The *Chronicle* is clearly not simply an "iconophile" history but has a complex view on the issue of iconoclasm: it is only one among many heresies, all of which are signs of greater evil to come. Though Constantine V was castigated for his iconoclasm, his ultimate literary role was to establish the prototype of greed to be fulfilled in the final imperial antitype, the "all-Devourer" Nikephoros I.

5   Interpreting the Antitypes in the Reader's Present

I have argued in this chapter that reading the *Chronicle* as presented in the manuscript *PG 1710* allows us to more easily read the text as it asked to be read. At the beginning of the *Chronographia* project George the Synkellos stated that his plan was to bring the work up to his present day in AM 6300–6302 (AD 807/8–810/11). It is impossible to imagine that he had no conception for a concluding end, and equally hard to imagine that he would not have structured the work to fulfill this impetus or driving idea—the ἀφορμαὶ of the *Preface*. The *Preface* states that George passed such an impetus on to Theophanes. And the latter part of the *Preface* stated that Theophanes had, with George, succeeded in giving the reader a clear classification of historical events of "some practical benefit." The reason for the composition of the text was to provide immediate relevance in the reader's own present:

> I believe that one who reads the actions of the ancients derives no small benefit from so doing.

Whatever benefit may have been intended, it is clear that the *Chronographia* project was believed to contain a meaning for the present in its arrangement of the past.

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119   Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)."

This injunction stated in the *Preface* was not only a literal invitation to add content, but also an invitation to fulfill the end of any text: interpretation. As seen in chapter 3, in the terms provided by the text itself this would entail identifying the "Pharaoh of the Mind" in the reader's present. I have argued here that this included tracing how types and antitypes were revealed and fulfilled as the work progressed towards the reader's present. That is, readers were enjoined to participate in the "completion" of the *Chronographia* project by applying the typological model provided by the First-Created Day thesis.

In this chapter I argued that the audience for the *Chronicle* was a unique interpretive, or textual community inclined to make sense of the *Chronicle*'s series of imperial portraits by identifying their typological interconnections and applying those to their own present.[120] The injunctions of the *Chronicle* and especially its *Preface* by Theophanes invited an entire liturgical community of readers to complete the work by looking for the meaning of the present in these past imperial types. In this way the First-Created Day's new theological-philosophical synthesis of time made it possible for the *Chronicle* to inject its narratives with the energy of the eschaton that we find in, for instance, Augustine's *City of God* and which would later be achieved for Latin historiography with the works of Otto of Freising.[121]

The progression of the imperial antitypes we have seen in this chapter marched towards Constantine V. However, worse was still to come with the arrival of "the punishment of our sins" in the final days: the "All-Devourer," Nikephoros I. The *Chronicle* portrays Nikephoran fiscal policies as the fulfillment of the portraits of the earliest tyrants in the *Chronographia*, for

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120   See Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). "We can think of a textual community as a group that arises somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization. It is an interpretive community. But it is also a social entity" (p. 150). Specifically, the definition of an "Ancient" textual community in B. Stock's formulation seems to characterize what we find in the *Chronographia*, one in which "literacy was routine" and so "more attention must be paid to reception and reader reconstruction, to intertextuality, and to oral discourse within well-worn rhetorical channels." For our text, "an educated community was assumed, the writings were longer, more complicated, and inseparable from their historical contexts." Thus, "the community preceded the critical text, which might bring about reform, reorganization, or sectarianism" (p. 151).

121   Sverre Bagge, "Ideas and Narrative in Otto of Freising's Gesta Frederici," *Journal of Medieval History* 22, no. 4 (1996): 345–77; Sverre Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World in German Historiography c. 950–1150*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 103 (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

Nikephoros is made to be the typological fulfillment of the Egyptian Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus. This would make Nikephoros the obvious candidate for George the Synkellos' "Pharaoh of the Mind." The portrait of Nikephoros identifies the year AM 6302 (AD 810) as the conceptual impetus of the *Chronographia* project, inviting the reader to perceive Nikephoros I as the ultimate Pharaoh by interpretating his deeds in the terms of an eschatological typology. In chapter 7 I will argue for this point. But in order to understand that portrait in full, we turn first to the other side of the coin: the *Chronicle*'s typology for the good ruler. The *Chronicle* fashioned these positive paradigms in a redemptive model. The *Chronicle*'s prototypes were rulers who could be and were corrupted— like the type established by Constantine I—but who would choose to repent rather than to pass their deception on as an inheritance for their successors.

Imperial Prototypes: Mothers, Sons, and Repentance

In parallel to the progenitor-successor negative imperial types of chapter 5, the *Chronicle* presented a trajectory of positive portraits or types. In the pre-Constantinian era these positive types were both imperial and ecclesiastical: generous emperors and bishops as martyrs for unity. After Constantine, the *Chronicle* constructed imperial paradigms that paired male and female types—a Son-Mother pair in Constantine-Helena; a Brother-Sister pair in Theodosios 11-Pulcheria; and a Mother-Son pair in Irene-Constantine VI. The latter male-female pairs built upon the types that came before, namely the imperial and ecclesiastical types of the early empire, and the male-female image of the emperor Constantine and his mother Helena.

As discussed in chapter 5, Constantine I was portrayed in such a way as to contain the seeds for both positive and negative imperial types. As the first Christian emperor, Constantine I established the question of how to combine Christian piety with imperial power. The dangers of this combination were presented in the progenitor-successor type we have already seen, where a deceived emperor lays out a path for his successor to persist in his errors. But the portrait of Constantine could be read in multiple ways. It also contained the paradigm for a successful Roman-Christian synthesis in Constantine's submission to Helena's counsel.

Following this pattern, the portrait of Theodosius 11 in *PG 1710* showed that as long as the emperor's virginal sister Pulcheria was given power as the emperor's primary advisor, their co-reign was the closest the *Chronicle* came to an ideal imperial type. On the other hand, the Mother-Son reign of Irene and Constantine VI showed an inversion of this type. Irene mutilated her son to stay in power and though she would repent and enact policies praised by the *Chronicle*, her reign paved the way to the coming of Nikephoros I, the "All-Devourer." The *Chronicle* presented the paradigmatic imperial type as a male-female combination in which power was shared. Nevertheless, this combination required a careful balance, indicated by the warning of the pairing of Irene and Constantine VI. Although female power was essential, the absence of a male emperor led to the influence of overly ambitious officials. Hence Irene, in the absence of her son as a partner, is presented as needing the proposed

partnership with Charlemagne in order to restore a balance of power and so save the empire.[1]

1 The Fulfillment of Early Rulers' Virtues: Constantine I with Helena

In the narrative covering Rome before the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the *Chronicle* emphasized good governance generally rather than an antagonism between the church and the empire. Though George the Synkellos identified many Roman emperors as persecutors, he never presented a persecuting Roman Empire *per se*, only evil rulers. As we have already shown at length, in the *Chronicle* the birth of the empire was the beginning of the present age, its *status quo* was the Roman Empire.[2] The present age was initiated by King Herod's prophesied reign, which defined the epoch as the end of the rule of Judea by Jews and the coming of the Messiah a generation later. Herod ruled as a sub-king under the Roman emperors who continued to rule Judea after his dynasty's demise. The Roman caesars were thus established as the providentially sanctioned line of rulers defining the Christian-Roman synthesis of divinely sanctioned power.

The *Chronicle* framed its paradigm for good rule in terms of generosity and martyrdom, the sacrificing of one's own for others. In sum this ethic could be described as communal: the good emperor gave to his citizens, and a good bishop labored for church unity. As we have seen and will see further, the *Chronicle* praised these virtues (fulfilled in Constantine) in terms of "piety." Thus, well before the image of Constantine, we find the *Chronicle* used descriptions of the late second and early third-century emperors to craft a model type

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1 Though Irene never took this path, it is notable for the history of the turn of the ninth century that such a positive view of the Carolingian revolution was current in Constantinople. Compare the differing views on the mutual influences between Greek Constantinople and Latin Rome in Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, AD 590–752* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), and Thomas F. X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

2 AT 433 / M 362 quoting Genesis 49:10. See also AT 431 / M 360 and AT 457 / M 383. Note comments on emperor Augustus' commendable deeds including his establishing the bisextus in the Roman calendar, significant for chronographers since it harmonized the Roman and Egyptian calendars. "Calculated by Augustus Caesar and the sages of that time," this reform established the leap year and brought the Roman calendar into line with other calendars based on the solar cycle. AT 450 / M 377 and AT 452–54 / M 378–81. Augustus was also noted for establishing the Indiction tax cycle which continued through the Byzantine period. AT 439 / M 368.

for an emperor dispensing riches to their citizens. Nerva (r. 96–98) "ruled with humanity and wisdom,"[3] and Macrinus (r. 217–218) proved "humane and considerate in everything, especially in military affairs."[4] Later emperors were specifically praised for their support of the Christians in an era where outright persecutions could also occur. Christians and the empire worked together when Marcus Aurelius' (r. 161–180) armies reaped the benefit of his toleration of Christians, for the *Chronicle* claims their prayers saved the emperor's army from the Germans.[5] Under Philip the Arab (r. 244–249) "the word of God was declared more openly," and though he did not open the imperial treasury to sponsor the churches as Constantine eventually would, the *Chronicle* portrays him as a full participant in the Christian faith.[6]

The emperors who gave to their subjects generously—Christian and non-Christian alike—merited the most attention. Remission of taxes is almost the imperial equivalent of almsgiving. The *Chronicle* was effusive about Hadrian's fiscal and religious policies as both generous with the empire's resources and protecting of (while not interfering with) the Christian Church. Hadrian (r. 117–138) also burned the tax records in a dramatic waiver of cities' financial obligations to the public treasury, and "forgave many other taxes." Besides being saved by Christian prayers, Marcus Aurelius would similarly prove himself a praiseworthy ruler not so much for his victories as the fact that he "disbursed public money and staged all kinds of spectacles … relaxed public taxes, burned the debt records in the Roman forum … and renewed laws and constitutions."[7]

It is worth noting that the *Chronicle* praises Hadrian for actions that we should find repulsive. Repeatedly through the *Chronicle* a characteristically medieval form of antisemitism is praised, from the persecution of Jews to outright violence or forced conversion. The *Chronicle* emphasized that it was the Jews (not the Romans) who first persecuted the early Christians, thus justifying

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3 Though the *Chronicle* presented Nerva positively as well. AT 500 / M 423.

4 AT 514 / M 436.

5 "Through the prayers of the Christians, the Roman army, on the verge of perishing by thirst amongst the Quadi, was rescued after God made it rain and destroyed their opponents the Germans and Sauromatai with a thunderbolt" (AT 508 / M 431). The narrative of this event was highly contested in late antiquity. George the Synkellos quotes this Christian version from Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.5.1–2; counter narratives attribute the miracle to the prayers of the emperor as in *Oration* 15 of Themistius, translated by Peter J. Heather and David Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius*, TTH 36 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 244.

6 "Philip was so devoted to the Christian faith that he even willingly confessed his sins and shared along with the multitude in the prayers at the church on the night of the feast of Pascha." AT 523 / M 443–44 (AM 5737).

7 AT 509 / M 432.

persecution against the Jews because "they" had done it first. Besides being blamed for the death of Christ, "the Jews" were made responsible for the martyrdom of the protomartyr Stephen and James the brother of Christ and bishop of Jerusalem.[8] The context of these accusations makes them even worse: juxtaposing these martyrs with the famous persecutions of the Christians by the emperor Nero, the *Chronicle* makes Jews equivalent to that universally hated emperor.[9] Thus, Hadrian (r. 117–138) was not only praised for *not* seeking out Christians for persecution but also for directly punishing Jews. Hadrian's dispatching an army against the revolt of Bar Cochba in Judaea was a relief to the Christians of Jerusalem, for "Chochebas" had "inflicted all kinds of ordeals on the Christians because they refused to ally with him against the Romans."[10] It is unpleasant to mention this aspect of the *Chronicle*'s polemic, but it also seems correct to emphasize that in seeking to understand how the *Chronicle* worked in its era, we must not only praise what is clever but also recognize and condemn the horrible ideologies which it helped perpetuate.

The creation of the *Chronicle*'s imperial types incorporated many pagan Roman emperors into an imperial Christian ethic of rule, to the extent that Roman rulers were portrayed as supporting Christians against Jews. Though the empire could be ruled by evil men, the *Chronicle* praised and emphasized rulers who promoted unity by supporting Christian churches, but especially rulers who showed generosity and mercy to all Romans by forgiving and remitting tax obligations. The best of the early emperors resisted the vice of avarice. Refusing to enforce heavy taxation, they instead forgave taxes and so exemplified the virtue of generosity.

The *Chronicle*'s portrayal of bishops added another dimension to the typologies that would be developed through the mother-son imperial pairs. This can be seen in the work's rhetoric against its opponent, Eusebius of Caesarea, which I discussed in the Introduction. One of the most prolonged attacks on Eusebius focused on his positive portrait of the controversial Christian philosopher and apologist Origen.[11] The *Chronicle* set a bishop, Dionysios of Alexandria, as an alternative to Eusebius' Origen. At issue here was not the finer points of doctrine, but rather the distinction between those who had

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8   In AM 5553, the Jewish leaders kill James, the brother of Christ and first Bishop of Jerusalem, which George treats at some length. AT 485–90 / M 408–13.

9   AT 486–90 / M 408–13. This is the transition from individual martyrdoms to collective persecution. The very next entry states: "Nero was the first to incite a persecution against Christians." AT 491 / M 414 (AM 5563).

10   AT 503 / M 426.

11   The historical account of Eusebius (as opposed to the discussion of his works) begins with the same entry that also introduces Origen in the *Chronicle*, AM 5685. AT 516 / M 438–39.

unified the political body of the church, and those who had divided it.[12] The *Chronicle* complained that instead of focusing on Dionysios of Alexandria's virtues, Eusebius had used parallels to Dionysios to try to rehabilitate Origen.[13] The *Chronicle* argued that Origen and his supporters divided the church while Dionysios had brought unity.

Another dispute concerning Bishop Dionysios—placed just before AM 5776—turned a historical event into a lesson about unity. Selected excerpts from the dispute between Dionysios of Alexandria and the priest Novatian, whom the *Chronicle* calls Navatus (Ναυᾶτος), were framed to show how good rulers bring about unity and bad ones destroy it. Novatian had asserted that bishops who had renounced the faith during persecutions should lose their episcopal office. For this he was portrayed as having done nothing but promote division in the church.[14]

Alternatively, the *Chronicle* uses an epistle from Dionysios to argue he deserved the honor accorded to martyrs.[15] While martyrs are usually limited

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12 As in the passage just preceding, on the Resurrection. AT 473–74 / M 395–96 (AM 5534). The *Chronographia*'s argument against Eusebius of Caesarea's portrait of Origen drew, ironically, on Eusebius of Caesarea's own *Martyrs of Palestine* and *Ecclesiastical History*.

13 Eusebius had pointed out that though Dionysios had fled persecution, he was nevertheless greatly honored by the Church and so Origen's flight from persecution should not be counted against him. George the Synkellos countered that Origen had avoided martyrdom under the persecution "not at all because of his godly uprightness, but rather because of his arrogant and self-trusting judgement." Eusebius had lavished praise upon a heretic while "neglecting" Clement, Hippolytus, Africanus, and "Dionysios the Great of Alexandria," and again for neglecting the persecutions suffered by Gregory Thaumaturgos and Cyprian of Carthage, "although he wastes his time with absurd encomia of the ungodly Origen." AT 525 / M 445–46 and AT 540 / M 459. Note the contrast with his father Leonidas, who George states was martyred in Alexandria. This is in the same entry, just a few lines before, that first mentions Origen. AT 512 / M 434. George went to great lengths to prove that Dionysios' suffering was "entirely different from the desertion of Origen." AT 536 / M 446. Origen fled from suffering and was a cause of division in the church. Dionysios of Alexandria's defense of the Church from heresy was portrayed as suffering for church unity and made him the model of the good bishop. AT 528 / M 448.

14 As George the Synkellos points out, this position was held even as the validity of Novatian's [Navatus'] own ordination was questioned. Novatian had attained episcopal office during the Decian persecution due to confusion over whether those who had repented of their apostasy could retain their offices as bishops and presbyters. Novatian held to the hardline position that they could not. Dionysios pronounced Novatians' own ordination a shame to the episcopal office, accusing him of obtaining the sacramental act of ordination, the "laying-on of hands," by coercion. He "split off from the Roman church … he emerged as leader and heresiarch of those who, in their arrogant opinion, called themselves 'Pure'" that is, those who had not recanted in the face of persecution. AT 533 / M 433.

15 Instead of focusing on the council of AD 252 which had accused Novatian of heresy, the text quotes from Dionysios of Alexandria's letter of 250/251 (transmitted via Eusebius)

to those who had actually died "to avoid idolatry," the text argued the higher martyrdom was suffering for church unity "to avoid dividing the church," and "to prevent schism."[16] Schismatics such as Origen, Eusebius, and Novatian divided the church with their "dissembling."[17] The alternative model was a bishop—or an emperor—whose struggle for orthodoxy was a struggle for church unity, a greater martyrdom than laying down one's life for the faith.[18] In contrast to the negative type of the progenitor-successor discussed in the previous chapter, the *Chronicle* used a different familial relationship to characterize its portraits of this unity: non-spousal male-female pairs. The image the *Chronicle* constructs of Constantine and Helena at the end of his reign is an alternative to Constantine's eventual deception by the Arian Eusebius of Nicomedia and his entrusting that bishop to ensure the good rule of his son Constantius. The positive, paradigmatic portrait of Constantine and Helena is one of an imperial partnership that did not meddle in the affairs of the church.

As already discussed in chapter 5, it is the specific arrangement of the entries for emperors in the manuscript *PG 1710*—our best evidence for how they were originally presented—which leads to particular insights as to how imperial reigns were to be interpreted by readers. At the end of Constantine's reign as it is presented in *PG 1710* there is an important notice that falls

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that turned the issue into a question of martyrdom: "If, as you say, you were led on unwillingly, you will prove this if you withdraw willingly. For it would be necessary to suffer everything whatsoever to avoid dividing the church of God. And martyrdom to prevent schism would not be less honorable than martyrdom incurred to avoid idolatry. Indeed, in my view it would be more honorable. For in the former case, one suffers martyrdom for a single soul, one's own, while in the latter it is for the whole church." εἰ ἄκων, ὡς φῄς, ἤχθης, δείξεις, ἐὰν ἀναχωρήσῃς ἑκών. ἔδει μὲν γὰρ καὶ πᾶν ὁτιοῦν παθεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ διακόψαι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ· καὶ ἦν οὐκ ἀδοξοτέρα τῆς ἕνεκεν τοῦ μὴ εἰδωλολατρῆσαι γενομένης ἢ ἕνεκεν τοῦ μὴ σχίσαι μαρτυρία· κατ' ἐμὲ δὲ καὶ μείζων. ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ μιᾶς τις τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς, ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὑπὲρ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας μαρτυρεῖ. AT 537 / M 457.

16 AT 538 / M 458. Dionysios would be described as just such a martyr, a bishop who "earnestly fought to reconstitute especially the Roman church, which was being thrown into disorder by Navatus [= Novatian], [Dionysios] everywhere urging repentance and harmony."

17 AT 95 / M 74.

18 Along with the models of imperial generosity just noted, Dionysios' bishop-martyr provided the *Chronographia*'s other ethical paradigm for Christian rulership. In time, this virtue would be demanded not only of bishops but of emperors, who were expected to preserve the unity of both church and empire. For a discussion of the Middle Byzantine debate over the meaning of a Christian emperor instigated by Leo III's question whether a ruler is emperor or priest, see Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158–91; 223–26. This edition, translated by Jean Birrell, is revised and so is to be preferred over the original *Empereur et prêtre* (Paris, 1996).

under an "In this year …" entry corresponding to the second half of the entry which de Boor labels AM 5816. This entry follows one dedicated entirely to the Council of Nicaea (which *PG 1710* labels AM 5816). The entry in question begins with the building of Byzantium (Constantinople) and then focuses on the unity among the bishops accomplished by the Council of Nicaea and by Constantine's follow-up work: establishing conformity in the celebration of Easter, publishing the decisions of the Council, honoring those who had suffered in earlier persecutions, and above all insisting on unity in the church by exhorting "all the bishops to maintain the peace and to refrain from reviling their neighbors." Constantine then pursued this injunction to the extent that "if he were to see a bishop committing adultery, he would readily shelter him in his purple cloak."[19] When challenged by "philosophers" about the decisions of Nicaea, Constantine, rather than answering them himself, sent them on to the bishop of Alexandria.

Readers are then told how these imperial and episcopal virtues came together in the relationship between Constantine and his mother, and as such provided a paradigm for the rest of the *Chronicle* of the ideal virtues associated with good rule. The entry discussed above concludes with a description of how Constantine went about finding the site for his new capital and filling it with lavish palaces and churches. Just before that, it connects his mother Helena and Makarios the bishop of Jerusalem in a holy project. Makarios is instructed to discover "the site of the holy Resurrection, that of Golgotha of the skull, and that of the life-giving wood," that is, of the True Cross.[20] In this context and at this moment Constantine establishes his mother as co-emperor.

> In this same year he crowned Helena, his god-minded mother, and assigned her as empress the privilege of coinage. She had a vision which ordered her to go to Jerusalem and to bring to light the sacred sites which had been buried by the impious. She begged her son Constantine to fulfil these commands sent to her from God. And he acted in obedience to her.[21]

Helena's divinely ordained expedition to the holy land is directly connected to her co-rulership with Constantine. We have already seen that Constantine's own rule was sanctioned by the appearance of "a sacred Cross made of light,"[22]

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19   MS 36 / dB 23.1–4.
20   MS 37 / dB 23.16–17.
21   MS 37 / dB 23.17–22.
22   MS 23 / dB 14.2–3.

from which he "devised a golden cross which exists to this day" and "ordered it to be carried forward into battle" against Maxentius just outside of Rome.[23] The resulting victory was described as a joint effort, won by "the victorious Constantine together with the victory-bringing Cross."[24] The relic of the cross is thus directly associated with the authority to rule over the Romans, and so the divine vision instructing Helena to find her own cross is to be understood in connection to Constantine's appointment of her as empress and inclusion of her in the iconography on the coinage.

In the next entry (labelled AM 5817 in *PG 1710*), Helena used her new imperial authority to command the destruction of pagan temples in order to facilitate her and Bishop Makarios' archaeological expedition. It is through this work that they discover not only the desired sacred sites of the passion of Christ, but the wood and nails of the cross. Helena returns to Constantine with the nails and a fragment of the wood and then passes away at the age of 80. It is Helena who is then the first to be buried in the new imperial mausoleum, the Church of the Holy Apostles.[25]

Though succinct, this established an important paradigmatic image for the *Chronicle*. Constantine had received the authority-granting vision of the cross. Nevertheless, when Helena received her divine vision "he acted in obedience to her," maintaining the maternal hierarchy. It is also significant that— as discussed in chapter 5—immediately after the death of Helena (AM 5818 in *PG 1710*), Constantine fell from his piety into deception. As long as Helena was alive to reign with him, good rule was maintained. Through its portrait of Constantine and Helena, the *Chronicle* established the relationship between an emperor and a co-ruling empress as the model for a prosperous, victorious, and peaceful Roman Empire. Without Helena, the unity of the empire began to slip away until on his deathbed, Constantine would entrust his succession to the Arian bishops who would lead his son Constantius down the path of disunity and strife.

2   The Paradigm of Good Rule: Theodosios II with Pulcheria

The *Chronicle* had the empress Helena complete the work of the "victorious Cross" for her son Constantine I. We have already seen how the *Chronicle* narrated Herakleios' successes as guided by the protection of the Mother of God.

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23   MS 23 / dB 14.5–6.
24   MS 23 / dB 14.13–15.
25   MS 42–43 / dB 27.14–15.
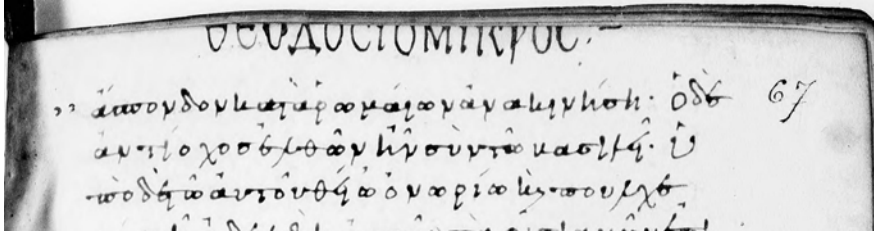
FIGURE 6.1 Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 67r top margin: ΘΕΟΔΟϹΙ[ΟϹ] ὁ ΜΙΚΡΟϹ (Theodosius II)
IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

Herakleios arrived at Constantinople as a usurper, but he bore icons of the
Mother of God on his ship masts and would go on to wage war in Persia under
her protection. These telling connections between successful reigns and the
protection of holy and powerful women found their fulfillment in the reign of
Theodosios II guided by his older sister the empress Pulcheria. The *Chronicle*
not only gave Pulcheria an important role in Theodosios II's story, but the nar-
rative divisions and subsections in *PG 1710* bent the timeline of Theodosios'
reign and that of his successor Maurice (whom Pulcheria married) around the
life of Pulcheria.

The beginning of the reign of Theodosios II is marked—as is the pattern for
PG 1710—with a header in the top margin of the page containing his first full entry
(figure 6.1). *Anni mundi* notices then divide the reign of Theodosios II into seven
narrative subsections. Under the reign of Theodosios II, many bits of text that
are separated into multiple entries in other recensions are presented as single
entries in *PG 1710*. This pattern is especially true for the beginning of the reign
of Theodosios, where only eight entries cover thirty-five years. Furthermore,
these subsections show even more differences in content between *PG 1710*
and the other recensions than what we have seen thus far.

The narrative structure of the entries under Theodosios II is in table 6.1. In
the first column I have allocated numbers to each entry for easy reference. It is
worth noting that though the reign of Theodosios II has many entries noted as
"absent" in the *PG 1710* version, all but one of the missing sections each amount
to approximately three lines of text or less in the critical edition. The one
exception is the extended variation under AM 5931 (table 6.1, no. 9).[26]

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26   In sum, the textual differences are the deletion (or addition) of notices having to do with
(1) interreligious conflicts in Persia (AM 5921, AM 5906), Jerusalem (AM 5908, AM 5926),
or Alexandria (AM 5933, AM 5934, AM 5935, AM 5928, AM 5914, AM 5906, AM 5905); and
(2) the fate of the empire, its political successions, and wars against the Goths in Rome

TABLE 6.1   Reign of Theodosius II and Pulcheria in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

No.	Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition

1	5901	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5901 and 5902 and 5905
		– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
		– variance:
		  – all three lines of de Boor's 5903 absent (dB 81.21–23)
		  – all three lines of de Boor's 5904 absent (dB 81.25–27)
		  – three lines of de Boor's 5905 absent (dB 81.30a & 81.31b–82.1a)

2	*In this year ...*	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5906 and 5907
		– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
		– variance:
		  – two lines from de Boor's 5907 absent (dB 82.16–17)
		  – all four lines of de Boor's 5908 absent (dB 83.11–14)
		  – 5909 and 5910 are dates without content; thus not in *PG 1710*

3	*In this year ...*	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5911–5912 and 5915–5916
		– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
		– variance:
		  – two lines from end of de Boor's 5911 absent (dB 83.23–24)
		  – all three lines of de Boor's 5913 absent (dB 84.7–9)
		  – all two lines of de Boor's 5914 absent (dB 84.11–12)
		  – 5917 date without content; thus not in *PG 1710*

and Ravenna (AM 5903, 5904, 5911, 5912, 5913 and nearly the entire long entry at AM 5931). I have already emphasized that my goal here is not to speculate about a relative hierarchy of recensions in lieu of an updated critical edition. At present I will make two observations. The textual differences seem to have an interest in (1) adding more material about non-Constantinopolitan events; and (2) giving an event to every year. Note also that C. Mango and R. Scott's frustrations with dating "errors" in the version of these entries preserved in K. de Boor (e.g., "chronological muddle" at MS 127n3) are much easier to reconcile with what we know from other sources if the way in which *PG 1710* recorded the chronology is given primacy.

TABLE 6.1   Reign of Theodosius II and Pulcheria in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (*cont.*)

No.	Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
4	**5917**	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5918
5	**5919**	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5919–5924 – in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry – variance: three lines from de Boor's 5921 absent (dB 87.18a and 24–25)
6	*In this year …*	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5925
7	**5926**	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5926 – variance: three lines from de Boor's 5926 absent (dB 92.20–22)

8	*In this year …*	– undated entry but text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5927 and 5930
		– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
		– variance:
		  – all two lines of de Boor's 5928 absent (dB 92.33–34)
		  – 5929 date without content; thus not in *PG 1710*

9	**5931**	– text in *PG 1710* = de Boor's 5931–5933
		– in *PG 1710* all that content is presented as a single uninterrupted entry
		– variance:
		  – sixty lines from de Boor's 5932 absent (dB 93.33b–95.25)
		  – two lines from de Boor's 5933 absent (dB 96.2–3a)
		  – all two lines of de Boor's 5934 absent (dB 96.12–13)
		  – all two lines of de Boor's 5935 absent (dB 96.15–16)

… to be continued in Table 6.2

In its narrative of Theodosios' reign, *PG 1710* puts many years into single entries thereby making the narrative pacing quite quick: readers move through carefully selected highlights without becoming involved in extended narratives. This changes in the second half of Theodosios' reign (considered below) where the pace suddenly slows.

The *Chronicle* makes the reign of Theodosios II also the reign of Pulcheria from the very first entry (AM 5901; table 6.1, no. 1), from Theodosios' succession to his father Arkadios:

> When Theodosios became sole ruler, his sister Pulcheria, who was a virgin 15 years old, managed the Empire excellently with the help of God.[27]

The entry is a sketch of Pulcheria's character, noting she convinced her sisters to adopt lives of virginity, educated her brother in comportment and piety, and constructed and endowed "numerous churches, poor-houses, hostels, and monasteries."[28] Since the *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* combines as a single entry (table 6.1, no. 1) the texts later Greek recensions separate into AM 5901–5905, this single beginning entry stands as a coherent narrative piece, ending with "… and the blessed Pulcheria gained complete control of affairs."[29]

The following narrative sections explain how Theodosius and Pulcheria brought military, dynastic, and religious unity. The second narrative subsection (table 6.1, no. 2) tells how the Roman empire served as a refuge for Christians being persecuted in Persia. After introducing Theodosios' marriage to Eudokia ("on the advice of Pulcheria"[30]), the third subsection (no. 3) describes successful interventions in the succession from Honorius to Valentinian in the Western capital of Ravenna to ensure unity of empire. The entry for AM 5917 (no. 4) similarly presents military victory as a further consequence as Rome is victorious over the Persians, who had broken a truce. The conclusion emphasizes the victory was due to divine favor on the Romans for "thus Christ exacted justice from the Persians in retribution for the many pious people whom they had killed unjustly."[31]

The entry for AM 5919 (table 6.1, no. 5) returns to the pattern in *PG 1710* of including several years' worth of content under one heading. This entry surveys the state of affairs in three of the empire's patriarchal sees. Theodosios II and Pulcheria explicitly re-enact the image of Constantine and Helena's partnership in Jerusalem: discovering relics (especially those of St. Stephen the first martyr), patronizing the holy places of Jerusalem, and encouraging worship of the cross and the Mother of God. On the other hand, a conflict is established between rival teachers in Constantinople. One Proklos preaches against

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27   MS 125 / dB 81.4–6.
28   MS 125 / dB 81.
29   MS 127 / dB 82.5.
30   Compare *PG 1710* f. 68v and MS 130 / dB 83.20–23.
31   MS 134 / dB 86.7–9.

the new and divisive Patriarch Nestorios. The section concludes with Cyril of Alexandria trying to bring Nestorios around to orthodox doctrine, but the conflict would not be fully resolved until the year after Theodosios' death, the first year of the reign of Pulcheria and her later husband Maurice. Nevertheless, it is given a partial resolution in the sixth narrative subsection (no. 6). This entry is devoted entirely to the Council of Ephesus which exiled Nestorios from the empire and condemned his teaching. The entry concludes with a prayer for purification: "'Cleanse the church, O man of God, from the Nestorian tares and their terrible (effects).' Divine justice followed the impious and blasphemous Nestorios in exile."[32]

The quick notice of AM 5926 (table 6.1, no. 7) points out how the Western emperor Valentinian married Theodosios and Eudokia's daughter Eudoxia. Then the second-to-last subsection here (no. 8) returns to the united piety of Theodosios and Pulcheria. After Theodosios sent his wife Eudokia to patronize and pray at the holy places of Jerusalem, Constantinople suffered a series of terrifying earthquakes. Unlike the antitype of Leo III, Theodosios and Pulcheria do not use the event to turn from orthodoxy or increase taxation but wait for divine guidance. Help comes in the form of a vision of an angelic youth who gives to the people of Constantinople a hymn (the *Trisagion* hymn) that leads to the salvation of the city. This is all attributed to "the blessed Pulcheria and her brother," so amazed at God's aid that "*they* issued a decree that this divine hymn was to be sung throughout the whole world."[33]

Finally, we come to the entry for AM 5931 (table 6.1, no. 9). Here there are significant textual differences in the Greek recensions. *PG 1710* begins the entry by noting that Valentinian was "unable to preserve Britain, Gaul, and Spain" giving the reason as merely his "emptiness and simplicity (κουφότης) of thought."[34] *Only PG 1710* notes Valentinian's mental state as an explanation; other recensions instead include an additional passage (edited from Procopius' *Bellum Vandalicum*) that explains the losses with an overview of the relevant campaigns.[35] As a result of these differences, the version in *PG 1710* offers a

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32   MS 142 / dB 91.32–92.2.

33   MS 145 / dB 93.17–19. Emphasis mine.

34   Compare f. 77r where this phrase occurs with dB 93.1–2, a variation not noted in de Boor's critical edition.

35   The entry for de Boor's AM 5931 in *PG 1710* is simply a notice that Valentinian "was … unable to preserve Britain, Gaul, and Spain, and even lost in addition western Libya." The entry then immediately proceeds to a notice concerning the translation of the body of St. Euphemia to Alexandria. Between these two notices, however, the other Greek recensions include a lengthy explanation of *how* Valentinian lost Libya to the Vandals. This addition comes from Prokopios' *Bellum Vandalicum*. This source, though it is used extensively for

quick set-piece between a wrong-thinking emperor who foments disunity in the empire, and a "pious" emperor who preserves unity. It does so by creating a contrast (via juxtaposition) between Valentinian's inability to preserve his empire and a description of how Theodosios worked to preserve unity among his bishops, separated by the translation of the relics of St. Euphemia (who will continue to appear at key moments in the *Chronicle*).

Before moving on to the second major section of Theodosios' reign, covering his last seven years, it is worth commenting briefly on the uniqueness of the account of Theodosios here in *PG 1710*. It cannot be over-emphasized that from the beginning this is presented as a joint reign. Theodosios is educated by Pulcheria, and she is in "complete control of affairs." As the entries progress, Pulcheria is always at Theodosios' side for his major successes. Pulcheria's importance is also notable in specific phrases. For example, the introduction of the city-saving *trisagion* hymn is attributed to "blessed Pulcheria, *and* her brother" (table 6.1, no. 8), thereby rendering the emperor's involvement secondary. The era is constructed in Pulcheria's image. Nevertheless, this dynamic changes in the section we are about to discuss, Theodosios' final years.

This transition away from the halcyon days of successful joint rule is signaled by a structural change. In the section just considered there were nine entries for thirty-five years. The pattern of combining many years into single entries ends with the "In this year ..." entry (as above) that refers to de Boor's AM 5936. From that entry's "In this year ..." there is a notice for six of the final seven years of Theodosios' reign as shown in table 6.2. Note that for clarity of discussion in this table I also number the entries individually, continuing from Table 6.1.

This change from the rapid pace of the first part of Theodosius II's reign serves to slow the narrative down, each year building directly on the last to mark out the progress of a major change of character for Theodosios. From this entry Theodosios II would make increasingly poor decisions, particularly by treating his public servants harshly, banishing those the *Chronicle* deems good, and rewarding those it finds detrimental. This progression comes to a crescendo when Theodosios expels empress Pulcheria, preferring the advice of his wife the empress Eudokia and the eunuch Chrysaphios Tzoumas.

the reign of Justinian, is not used otherwise in the *Chronographia* until the entry for AM 5964. Here in AM 5931 it interrupts the main source for this section, Theodore Lector.

TABLE 6.2   Reign of Theodosius II and Pulcheria in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710* (continued)

No.	Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
		... continued from Table 6.1
10	*In this year ...*	– text as in de Boor's 5936
11	**5937**	– text as in de Boor's 5937
12	*In this year ...*	– text as in de Boor's 5938
13	*In this year ...*	– text as in de Boor's 5939
14	**5940**	– text as in de Boor's 5940, AND:
		– text as in de Boor's 5941, but here a single entry
15	*In this year ...*	– text as in de Boor's 5942, AND:
		– text as in de Boor's 5943 but here a single entry
16	**5943**	– text as in de Boor's 5944*

* Note: see discussion of Pulcheria-Maurice

The first four of these final entries each describe the same sort of event. In the first entry (table 6.2, no. 10) Theodosios turns on his palace chamberlain (*praepositus*) and forces him into a property-less monastic retirement. Under AM 5937 (no. 11) Theodosios also becomes jealous of the popularity which the City Prefect Kyros earned for his generous public building projects, forcing him into exile (where he nonetheless becomes bishop of Smyrna). Under the following "In this year ..." entry (no. 12) Theodosios accepts "John the Vandal," a rebel against Valentinian, as a hostage; but then his new primary advisor the eunuch Chrysaphios Tzoumas breaks Theodosios' pledge and has John executed. In the next entry (no. 13) the orthodox bishops (Proklos of Constantinople and Cyril of Alexandria) who had guarded the orthodoxy of Theodosios' empire die. One of them, Cyril, is replaced by the "wild and savage" Dioskoros. These short entries serve as a catalogue of errors in judgment. Either by will or fate Theodosios II loses his chamberlain, city prefect, his two strongest allies in the *ecclesia*, and permits an unnecessary political murder.

The single extended entry that follows (table 6.2, no. 14) combines de Boor's AM 5940 with AM 5941 (the equivalent of 114 lines in the critical edition). The result is to use a single extended entry to show the consequences of the flurry of poignant actions just discussed.[36] The theme is Theodosios' "simplicity"

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36   See: dB 98.11–100.11 and 100.13–101.24.

(κουφότης), the same characteristic that was blamed for Valentinian's loss of Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Libya in AM 5931 (as noted above, for whom this term is *only* in the text of *PG 1710*).[37] Theodosios' "simplicity" leads to being manipulated by Chrysaphios Tzoumas into forcing Pulcheria to retire to the suburban Hebdomon. "With Pulcheria staying quiet and Eudokia directing the empire" a fateful opposition between empress Eudokia and the virgin Pulcheria is the result.[38]

Eudokia is immediately caught having an affair and her unlucky partner is executed. Eudokia nevertheless begins conspiring with Chrysaphios to convene the famous "Robber Synod" at Ephesos (a council that never achieved ecumenicity for the violence involved in its proceedings). This council is described as an attempt to catch out Eudokia's and Chrysaphios' enemy, Flavian the patriarch of Constantinople. After the synod Theodosios upholds its faulty rulings despite the opposition of numerous bishops (including Pope Leo) and the Western emperor Valentinian and his empress Eudoxia (Theodosios' own daughter). For the *Chronicle* all of this is a reminder of how much Theodosios' earlier virtues had depended upon his trust in Pulcheria:

> The emperor Theodosios was easily swayed: carried by every wind so that he often signed papers unread. Among these even the most wise Pulcheria had inserted unread a donation ceding his wife Eudokia to slavery, which he signed and for which he was severely reproached by Pulcheria.[39]

From this low point Theodosios exhibited the change that the imperial models of Herakleios or Leo III would be unable to do: instead of persisting in error, he repented.

Under the **AM 5942** entry (table 6.2, no. 15), Theodosios suddenly reversed course for he "realized that he had been deceived by Chrysaphios' villainy."[40] He banished Chrysaphios and placed the blame for everything on Eudokia. Eudokia left in repentant self-exile for Jerusalem, and Pulcheria was recalled. Pulcheria immediately set about righting wrongs by translating more relics into the city and patronizing churches. Theodosios II's errors did still have

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37   Theodosios: MS 156 / dB 100. 17. The phrase describing Valentinian in AM 5931 is not noted in the critical edition. See *PG 1710*, f. 77r.

38   MS 155 / dB 99.16–17.

39   MS 157 / dB 101.13–17.

40   MS 158 / dB 101.28–29.

consequences: the *Chronicle* connects the Robber Synod of Ephesos with the disruption of the empire by the invasions of Gizerich and the Vandals. This is a chronological sleight of hand to prove a rhetorical point: in fact, these invasions of Africa had taken place twenty years earlier, Africa had fallen ten years before, and Gizerich had agreed to the truce with Valentinian a full seven years prior. Nevertheless the *Chronicle* associates all of these disturbances to Roman supremacy as well as the invasion of his empire by Atilla the Hun with Theodosius' fleet being in Sicily to enforce renewed negotiations with Gizerich.[41] Thus, the *Chronicle* makes an explicit effort to give Theodosios consequences for his errors, but unlike with Constantine, Herakleios, and Leo III's mistakes, Theodosios recovered before too great a damage had been done, specifically by returning the "blessed Pulcheria" to a position of power.

Theodosios passes away just as he sues for peace. Here at the end of Theodosios' reign we find the narrative divisions in *PG 1710* once again guiding a reader in how to understand the significance of his era. The *Chronicle* subsumes the story of Theodosios' death under Pulcheria's own narrative:

> A short while after the Roman army had returned from the war against Attila, the emperor Theodosios died on 20 July, in the third indiction.
>
> The blessed Pulcheria, before the emperor's death was known to anyone, summoned Marcian, a man distinguished by his prudence and now old and very capable and said to him:
>> *Since the emperor has died, and I have chosen you from the whole Senate for being a virtuous man, give me your word that you will guard my virginity, which I have dedicated to God, and I shall proclaim you emperor.*
> When he had promised this, she summoned the patriarch and the Senate and proclaimed him emperor of the Romans.[42]

There is obvious parallelism to the Virgin Mary in this image. Pulcheria sacrifices her public virginal status to marry an older man who will protect that status in order to preserve the οἰκουμένη (in this case, the empire). Similarly, the virginal Mother of God had accepted marriage to the elderly Joseph in order preserve the οἰκουμένη (in that case, God's providential plan).

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41   These negotiations were indeed happening in this year: MS 157 / dB 101; Atilla: MS 159 / dB 102–3.

42   MS 159 / dB 103.6–16.
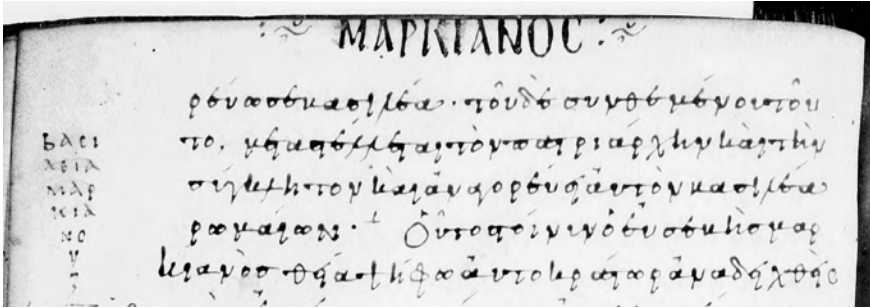
FIGURE 6.2   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 84v top margin: ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟϹ (Marcian)
               IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

Furthermore, though the top margin indicates that the reign of Marcian begins on this folio (figure 6.2), as in the quotation above, the *text* in *PG 1710* continues without any break.[43]

Therefore, what should have been one entry on the end of Theodosios' reign, and a second on the reign of Marcian (following the pattern established by the entire rest of the manuscript) is instead a single entry on the triumphant return of Pulcheria from monastic exile and her imitation of the Mother of God in her virginal emperorship under Marcian's protection. Marcian's own miraculous escape from Gizerich is described as significant because this escape made it possible for him to become the guardian of Pulcheria's virginity. The final military defeat of Attila the Hun seals the divine blessing on this arrangement. Though the header noted above had signaled the reign of Marcian as a new narrative section, the first entry in Marcian's reign preserves narrative continuity by making no *annus mundi* break and instead using an "In this year …" notice. The story remains Pulcheria's.

The first narrative break of Marcian's reign is designated AM 5943 (table 6.2, no. 16). This entry discusses the synod of Chalcedon (AD 451), which famously made a declaration of the "two natures and wills" in the one person of Christ. The entire proceedings begin with a subtle but significant notice. The synod began "when all the bishops and the Senate had gathered in the martyrium of St. Euphemia."[44] Though Pulcheria is not mentioned there by name, the entry associates Pulcheria and her "complete control of affairs" with the very location of the council of Chalcedon. I already discussed the narrative significance of Euphemia's translation to Alexandria at nearly the very end of the

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43   Based on the ink color and the presence of the same majuscule script that can also be found in the text proper on folios 202v and 338v (see chapter 9, section 2.1), I hold the note in the left margin (βασιλεία μαρκιανοῦ) to be the work of the original scribe.

44   MS 163 / dB 105.23–24.

notices under AM 5931, the last entry before Theodosios began his descent into near-heresy. In both of these minor asides, the text of the *Chronicle* recalls the memory of Euphemia in order to associate her person with the joint reign of Theodosios and Pulcheria. Rather than emphasizing the theological definitions, the entry fits the synod into the consistent imperial ethic we have identified: the restoration of unity.

The structure of *PG 1710* made the narrative of Theodosios' reign into Pulcheria's own. Pulcheria's story comes to a close with her death in AD 453, noted under the entry for AM 5945. In this conclusion the *Chronographia* emphasized that Pulcheria's blessedness as a ruler came from her liberality (rather than her doctrinal orthodoxy):

> [Pulcheria] had done may good deeds and left all her possessions to the poor. Marcian readily distributed these large amounts. She herself had founded numerous houses of prayer, poor-houses, hostels for travelers, and burial-places for strangers, among which was the holy martyr Laurentius.[45]

Pulcheria established a new model for rule: the model of the God-bearer who gave all for imperial unity and peace. It is true that Pulcheria did not take over the structure of the text by being afforded her own header: the era is still marked by a header for Theodosios and the next by a header for Marcian. Nevertheless, in other ways the narrative structure of *PG 1710* marked out the era of Theodosios' reign as the era of Pulcheria. The narrative transitions in *PG 1710* emphasized and fit around Pulcheria's time in power. The paradigmatic image presented was one of an ideal joint reign: Pulcheria worked in tandem with men, first her brother who served as her partner and secondly her late-in-life spouse Marcian who served as her guardian. This was the *Chronicle*'s paradigmatic image of successful "pious" rule. I now turn to how that image served as a type whereby to understand the much more recent (and much more troubling) joint reign of the Empress Irene and her son Constantine VI.

3 Irene and Constantine VI: From a Holy Beginning to a Failed Joint Reign

The portrait of Pulcheria in the *Chronicle* culminated in an image of a virginal queen like the Mother of God. The account of Irene began with another image of the Mother of God, portraying the empress as the regent *hodegetria* who

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45 MS 164 / dB 106.25–29.

showed-the-way to her son Constantine's reign.[46] However, when conflict arose, and Irene's supporters blinded her son (the text is ambiguous about whether Irene ordered the action), that image was shattered. As it had with Leo III, at this moment of crisis the *Chronicle* ceased calling Irene "pious." Unlike Leo III, however, Irene recovered her standing. The dynamic image of Irene in the *Chronicle* gave readers a practical paradigm for imperial "piety": a ruler who erred, but then repented. In this way Irene's portrait remained in the image of a *hodegetria*, pointing the way not to her son's reign but to correction and repentance.

Framing Irene's reign as a positive imperial type was an authorial choice. Irene could have been depicted as more evil than Nikephoros I. The *Chronicle* described Nikephoros' actions as causing widespread suffering, but Irene's attack on her own son is abhorrent and more dramatic and shocking than any single crime by Nikephoros. However, instead of damning Irene the *Chronicle* crafted her image as a repentant ruler. When Irene's reign ended with Nikephoros I forcing her from power, Irene was described like the bishop Dionysios: a martyr for unity, swallowed by the "all devouring" Nikephoros I.

The header marking the beginning of Irene's reign in the top margin of *PG 1710* has been almost entirely cropped (figure 6.3). All that can be stated is that there once *was* a header, and it was long enough that it must have denoted both Irene and Constantine. An early marginal note supports this reading. The marginal notation in red by an individual whom I would describe as the Rubricator of *PG 1710* is one of (by my count) thirty-four such notes, all in the same striking ink (for another example see *PG 1710* f. 349r reproduced in chapter 5 section 4.2). Our Rubricator's script is an early minuscule script but one that uses different ligatures than the primary scribal hand. The note on the present folio marks the beginning of the relevant entry (below) and reads: βασιλ[εία] εἰρήνης καὶ κωνσταντί[νο]ς τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτῆς ("reign of Irene and Constantine, her son"). If this note echoes the original formulation of the (now cropped) header, it is notable that it subjects Constantine to Irene. The second notation, to be seen in the upper left margin just below the header, is found at key moments throughout the manuscript though it was not made by the original scribe either. It is an abbreviation for ὡραῖον ("timely," or "useful") and whether meant to note Irene's reign or the immediately adjacent

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46   Bissera V. Pentcheva, "The Hodegetria Icon and Its Tuesday Procession," in *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 109–43.
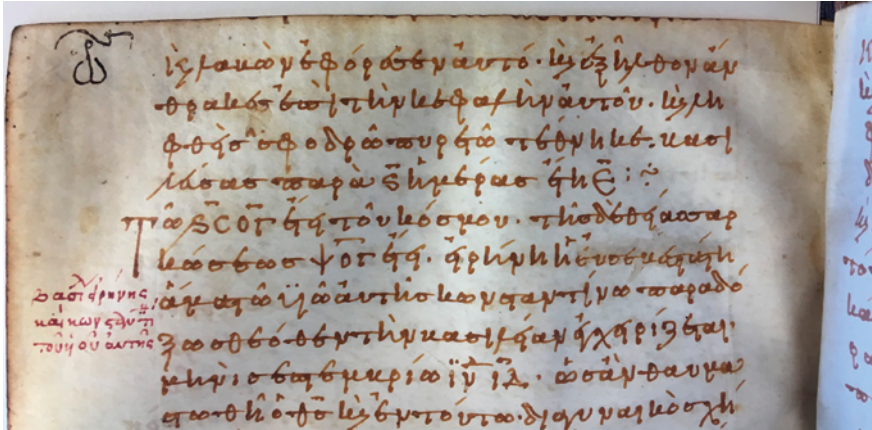
FIGURE 6.3 Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 371v top margin: markings of original header
PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE BY THE AUTHOR

story of Leo IV's death (by boils attributed to his fondness for an overly elaborate crown) it provides additional evidence of attention paid to this transition in power.

The structure is shown in table 6.3. As in table 6.1 and 6.2, here I have also used the first column to allocate numbers to each entry for easy reference. The *Chronicle* in *PG 1710* treats this entire period of AM 6273 through AM 6294 as a single joint reign or era and thus as a single narrative. Furthermore, the end of Irene's reign in *PG 1710* was not denoted by an AM entry, repeating the odd blending of two eras just observed at the end of Pulcheria's reign. There due to Pulcheria's continued presence as empress there was no "AM" subsection to break the narrative when Maurice came to the throne. Besides these two instances, the beginning of every other emperor's reign started not only with a header in the top margin but with a new entry and a new *annus mundi*. Irene's narrative is not completed by a new header for her successor until after her deposition, which is already the first official year of the emperor Nikephoros I. In *PG 1710* the narrative thus continues from Irene's confrontation with Nikephoros, right through to her exile, and finally her death. The story of Irene is embedded in that of Nikephoros.

Compared to some of the reigns we have studied—such as Constantine I or Theodosios II—there are almost no variations in the text of Irene's narrative across the different recensions. Furthermore, the *Chronicle* presents the entire reign of Irene as a joint reign with Constantine VI, using the *annus mundi* headings to denote only two subsections (i.e., table 6.3, nos. 1–10, and nos. 11–19).

TABLE 6.3   Reign of Irene and Constantine VI in the *Chronicle* of *PG 1710*

No.	Headings in *PG 1710*	Contents compared to de Boor's edition
1	**6273**	– text = de Boor's 6273
2	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6274
3	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6275
4	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6276
5	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6277
6	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6278
7	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6279
8	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6280
9	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6281
10	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6282
11	**6283**	– text = de Boor's 6283
12	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6284
13	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6285 BUT:
		– missing all of de Boor's 6286 (dB 469.27–28)
14	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6287 AND:
		– text = de Boor's 6288 but here a single entry
15	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6289
16	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6290 AND:
		– text = de Boor's 6291 but here a single entry
17	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6292
18	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6293
19	*In this year …*	– text = de Boor's 6294

The structure of the narrative in *PG 1710* lends a coherence to Irene's portrait that is impossible to find in the critical edition and translation. In these modern versions what is a single era in *PG 1710* is divided into multiple reigns and so multiple narrative sections (depending on whether Irene was reigning jointly with Constantine or as a sole ruler).[47]

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47   In Mango and Scott's translation first Constantine reigns "together with his mother" (Κωνσταντῖνος σὺν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ) from AM 6273–6282 (AD 780–791), then Constantine is emperor alone from AM 6283–6289 (AD 791–797), and then Irene reigns again but alone (Ῥωμαίων βασίλισσα Εἰρήνη πάλιν) from AM 6290–6294 (AD 797–802).

The *Chronicle* began its account of Irene and Constantine VI by presenting them both in an image of sanctity immediately after the header:

> In **AM 6273**, YEAR OF THE INCARNATION 773 [AD 780/781], on 8 September of the 4th Indiction, the most pious Irene together with her son Constantine were miraculously entrusted by God with the Empire so that in this matter also God might be glorified through a widow and her orphan son as He was about to overthrow the boundless impiety directed against Himself and His servants and the oppression of all the churches by God's adversary Constantine [V]; just as aforetime He had overthrown the Devil by the weak hands of fishermen and illiterate folk.[48]

The *Chronicle* plays with multiple associations by shifting from one gospel metaphor to another. First, Irene and Constantine are like the Mother of God and the Christ child. Then they are like the apostles. Irene is at one point presented in imitation of Christ himself. The text notes that forty days after her "miraculous" accession to the throne Irene was faced with a challenge to the throne from of one of the sons of Constantine V, another Nikephoros. Forty days is the length of time that Christ spent in the desert after his baptism, only to emerge and be challenged by the Devil. Irene is challenged by this Nikephoros and responds to her challenges with similar success: she swiftly stops the plot and dispatches the conspirators to monasteries. The entry closes as it began, exalting Irene and Constantine VI for the effect of their reign on the church:

> From that time on the pious began to speak freely.... God's word spread about, those who sought salvation were able to renounce the world without hindrance, God's praises rose up to heaven, the monasteries recovered, and all good things were manifested.[49]

To cement the dawn of a new era, a coffin was discovered with a prophetic inscription:

> Christ will be born of the Virgin Mary and I believe in Him.
> O sun, you will see me again in the reign of Constantine and Irene.[50]

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48   MS 626 / dB 454.6–12.
49   MS 627 / dB 455.8–12.
50   MS 627 / dB 455.15–17.

The reign of Constantine and Irene is thus tied explicitly to the Virgin, to the Apostles, to the life and work of Christ, and even prophetically to the ends of days when "the dead in Christ will rise."[51]

In the entries which constitute this first section under AM 6273 (table 6.3, nos. 1–10), *PG 1710* establishes a positive portrait of Irene, even as some troubling narrative threads which would be developed later are also established. The eunuch Staurakios (greatly trusted by Irene) oversees some military victories (nos. 3–4), but hatred towards him is present in the army (no. 2). The army remains divided with many soldiers still loyal to the legacy of Constantine V (no. 6). The Roman military is presented in disarray, having botched campaigns and negotiations with the 'Abbasids (no. 2) and having shown disloyalty to the empress by disrupting her plans to hold a church council in Constantinople (no. 6).

The church is also presented as disordered in this period. The election of Tarasios—to whom George the Synkellos would at some point be appointed—is presented as an effort to reconcile the church of Constantinople to the rest of the patriarchal sees. Tarasios' election is narrated primarily through a purported speech in which he argued why he would not accept the patriarchate without calling for an ecumenical council to reestablish unity across the empire—one of the constant themes of the entire project.[52] In the rhetoric of his speech Tarasios emphasizes a theme that we have seen through the whole *Chronicle*: the job of all bishops is to achieve and maintain an empire-wide unity. Tarasios' council is duly called and held, despite the army's ongoing opposition to the regime of Irene. This is the Second Council of Nicaea which overturned the iconoclast policies of Leo III and Constantine V, later upheld at the Council of Constantinople of 843 during the regency of Theodora and the Patriarch Methodios for the young Michael III (to which I return in chapter 9).

In these entries Irene also begins a positive relationship with Charlemagne, King of the Franks. Throughout the reign of Irene Charlemagne would present

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51 καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ ἀναστήσονται. 1 Thessalonians 4.16.

52 "Nothing is welcome and pleasing to God like us being united and becoming a single and universal church ... so we ask ... an ecumenical council be convened: that we, who belong to one God, should be made one; that we, who belong to the Trinity, should be united and be of one mind and of equal honor; that we, the one body of Christ who is our head, should be fitted and joined together; that we, who belong to the Holy Spirit, should stand by one another and not one against the other; that we, who belong to the truth, should believe and say the same things; that there should not be a dispute and division among us, but that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding should guard all of us." MS 633 (adapted) / dB 459.28–460.7.

a foil to machinations in Constantinople, such as the disorder in the church that Tarasios hoped to overcome. In his first appearance (under entry no. 2, table 6.3) Charlemagne offers marriage between Irene's son Constantine VI and one of his daughters (Erythro, or Rotrud). Despite the warning signs, this was a promising beginning in which Irene identified and addressed errors of the past. Nevertheless, in the final two years under this section the narrative makes an ominous turn. In the midst of the conciliar victory of "the most holy patriarch" Tarasios, whose decree "was read out and signed by the emperor and his mother,"[53] the *Chronicle* makes clear that something disastrous is about to happen:

> God's church found peace, even though the Enemy does not cease from sowing his tares among his own workmen; but God's church when she is under attack always proves victorious.[54]

This conclusion serves as a thesis statement for the entries to follow when this newly established unity comes under attack.

The first section of Irene's reign concludes with the empress turning away from her alliance with Charlemagne by breaking off the engagement of Constantine VI to Rotrud, despite Constantine VI's commitment to the idea. The empire is successfully attacked by the ʿAbbasids and the Bulgars, and Irene begins a campaign against her own son's growing influence. As a part of this plan, Irene forces Constantine to marry one Maria of Amnia in an attempt to solidify a key alliance. The *Chronicle* is not ambiguous about its opposition to these policies. The military defeats imply the empress was making poor decisions, but the *Chronicle* is also explicit in its condemnation, attacking Irene's work as Satan's efforts to break the peace of the palace and the unity restored in the church. The last entry in the section (table 6.3, no. 10) begins:

> In this year the devil, grudging the emperors' piety, inspired certain evil men to set the mother against her son and the son against his mother.[55]

The blame here is largely laid at Irene's feet, though in a continuation of a theme I have already noted several times, her advisors are also blamed as the instigators.

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53   MS 637 / dB 463.
54   MS 637 / dB 463.
55   MS 638 / dB 464.10–12.

Constantine VI is given substantial justification for his pursuit of greater power, and in the end he is even framed implicitly as a sort of martyr. First, having reached the age of twenty, "he was vigorous and very able (γεγονό-τος ... ῥωμαλέου τε ὄντος καὶ ἱκανοῦ πάνυ) and saw that he had no authority whatsoever."[56] Nevertheless, he is held hostage by his mother, who has him beaten and confined and begins a process (continued in the following entries) of trying to get all of the imperial armies to deny their oath to serve the joint reign of Irene and Constantine, and to instead serve only Irene.

The section ends by subtly framing the persecution of Constantine VI as a kind of martyrdom. This recalls the discourse established by the *Chronicle* in its earliest entries, when unity was the greatest virtue for leaders, and those striving for it were given the title of martyr. A final military defeat underscores this rhetoric. On the one hand, it is a symptom of divine disfavor with the Empire and so signals the errors of Irene. On the other, in the midst of the Roman fleet's failed attempt to fight off the ʿAbbasid attack on Cyprus, a story is told of a martyr for unity. The *strategos* Theophilos is encouraged by Harun al-Rashid to turn traitor to the Roman Empire and so sow disunity and destruc-tion. But Theophilos—who is described exactly like Constantine VI as "a vigor-ous and very able man (ῥωμαλέος ἀνὴρ καὶ ἱκανώτατος)"—refused and instead laid down his life for the sake the empire "and so proved an excellent martyr."[57] The *Chronicle* thus actively associates Constantine with this soldier-martyr, underscoring that Irene and her advisors are the ones disrupting the possibil-ity that Irene and Constantine VI could achieve a joint reign in the model of the Constantine-Helena or Theodosios-Pulcheria types.

4   From Irene the Sinner to Irene the Repentant

The second narrative section, which begins with the notice of **AM 6283** (table 6.3, no. 11), depicts another emperor as a martyr by working through a parallel narrative trajectory. This time that emperor is Irene. This section begins from a point of near-complete disaster. Irene attempts to have all of the thematic armies swear loyalty to her alone. This turns on its head as, begin-ning with the Armeniac *thema*, the armies revolt and instead swear loyalty to Constantine VI alone. The *Chronicle* offers a vocative complaint against the enemy of peace and unity:

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56   MS 638 / dB 465.24–26.
57   τὴν διὰ ξίφους τιμωρίαν ὑπομείνας μάρτυς ἄριστος ἀνεδείχθη. MS 639 / dB 465.25–26.

> The wicked Devil's cunning! See how he hastens to destroy the human race by means of many machinations![58]

It quickly becomes clear that while the *Chronicle* supports the frustrations of the kingly martyr Constantine VI, he should have worked for a joint rule of Mother and Son.

With the armies backing him, Constantine VI takes control of the capital and breaks from his mother, sending her to the Eleutherios palace where she is confined (admittedly in luxury). The eunuch Staurakios, who is blamed for inciting the conflict between Irene and Constantine, is flogged, tonsured, and sent to exile in Armenia. To retain control Constantine decides to now blind his uncles, the remaining sons of Constantine V. For good measure Constantine VI also includes Alexios, the *strategos* of Armenia, in this group blinding. This is Constantine's fall. The *Chronicle* immediately identifies the flogging, tonsuring, imprisonment and then blinding of Alexios not as a wise precaution but as a great and unjust evil. Constantine's own fate is prophesied as a consequence of his pre-emptive persecution of Alexios:

> But not for long did God's judgment leave this unjust deed unavenged: for after a lapse of five years, in the same month and also on a Saturday, the same Constantine was blinded by his own mother.[59]

The consequences for the empire of this Devil-instigated disunity in the imperial family plays out in the following four entries (which cover de Boor's AM 6285–6289).

The Armeniac theme decides to remain loyal to Irene, presumably because of Constantine V's treatment of its *strategos* Alexios. Further repudiating his connections to Armenia, Constantine VI rids himself of his unwanted bride Maria of Amnia (an alliance which had been blamed on his mother's demands), who voluntarily took herself to a monastery. The *Chronicle* notes Constantine's immediate marriage to Theodote as one that he had entered into "illegally."[60] However, the text directly goes on to lay the real blame for the subsequent international controversy of the Moechian Schism at the feet of the leaders of the monastery of St. John in Stoudios: Plato, and his more famous nephew Theodore. The position of the *Chronicle* in all of this seems to be marginally on the side of Constantine VI. Though it had described his

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58   MS 641 / dB 466.10–11.
59   MS 643 / dB 468.17–21.
60   MS 645 / dB 470.2–3.

marriage negatively, the opposition of the monks is the action that actually creates disunity. It is the Stoudite monks who break with the Patriarch Tarasios over Constantine's desire to marry Theodote and so give cause to Irene to further break with her son.

In the next entry ("In this year ..." de Boor's AM 6289) this all leads to open conflict between the supporters of Irene and those of Constantine VI. Constantine is beset by tragedy from multiple sides. His son is born, but in his joy he leaves his mother unwatched at the baths, and she begins plotting against him in that very moment. Constantine embarks on a campaign, but the supporters of his mother in the army undermine it completely. After this failure Constantine returns home only to learn of the death of his infant son, and "he wept bitterly over him."[61] The imperial regiments around the capital, the *tagmata*, side with Irene and manage to capture Constantine. The emperor had been trying to sail for Pylai (across the Sea of Marmara on the way to Nicaea) after a race at the small hippodrome of St. Mamas (across the Golden Horn from the Blachernai region). Given an impetus by the empress along the lines of "who shall rid me of this turbulent [son]," on August 15, AD 797, on the feast celebrating the Dormition of the Mother of God, the supporters of the mother of Constantine

> ... confined him to the Porphyra where he had been born. About the ninth hour they blinded him in a cruel and grievous manner with a view to making him die at the behest of his mother and her advisers. The sun was darkened for seventeen days and did not emit its rays so that ships lost course and drifted about. Everyone acknowledged that the sun withheld its rays because the emperor had been blinded. In this manner his mother Irene acceded to power.[62]

Irene's coming to power is thus overshadowed by a portrait of Constantine in the image of Christ. Where God darkened the heavens at the death of his innocent son Jesus the Christ, so too God darkened the heavens at the blinding of the innocent Constantine. Thus, even though Constantine VI had been said to have set up his own demise through his treatment of the *strategos* Alexios and the sons of Constantine V, nevertheless, the *Chronicle* did not use this to excuse those who actually carried out that subsequent judgment.

The *Chronicle* condemns the blinding of Constantine VI even further by immediately juxtaposing that event with the attempted blinding of Pope Leo

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61   MS 648 / dB 471.28–29.
62   MS 648–49 / dB 472.15–22.

by the supporters of Pope Hadrian in Rome.[63] Unlike Constantine, Leo—earlier described as "a most honourable and highly respected man"[64]—managed to survive the torture without losing his sight. It is striking that the *Chronicle* used juxtaposition to directly associate these two events, even though it also made clear to readers that Leo's blinding in fact occurred a year later.[65] It seems to have done so not only to associate the blindings, but to contrast the two kingdoms in order to prove a point about how low the empire had fallen, for the text uses this occasion to explain how due to this event, Rome was lost to Constantinople. "[Pope Leo] sought refuge with Karoulos, king of the Franks, who took bitter vengeance on [Leo's] enemies and restored him to his throne, Rome falling from that time onwards under the authority of the Franks."[66]

The *Chronicle* thus created a juxtaposition between the two blinding ordeals to make a comparison in which the Byzantines clearly came out the worse. Charlemagne's defense of the holy and suffering Pope was linked with his subsequent position as protector of Rome. The comparison between the two blinding ordeals was clearly to the detriment of the Byzantine empress, while Charlemagne's defense of the holy and suffering Pope in AD 797 made him the *de facto* protector of Rome, and in AD 800 the *de jure* emperor of the Romans. The text placed Charlemagne's deeds in direct parallel with Irene's by mentioning Leo's blinding and subsequent coronation of Charlemagne both before its time (AD 797 or AM 6289) as well as in its proper place four years later (AD 800 or AM 6293).

In all this the *Chronicle* invited the reader to make a *synkrisis*, or a comparative judgement, and realize how Irene's envy and ambition led her to neglect

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63   MS 650n12.

64   MS 648 / dB 471.19.

65   The blinding and Irene's ascension occurred in AD 796/7, but Charles was not crowned for another 4 years. The *Chronicle* indicates awareness by noting the event's proper place in the indiction cycle. To confirm the fact, under AM 6293 (AD 800/801), the entry begins: "In this year, on 25 December, Indiction 9, Karoulos, king of the Franks was crowned by Pope Leo …". The chronographer knew what he was doing in placing this story here. The explicit reference to the indiction cycle—"Indiction 9"—indicates to the audience that this event did not actually occur at this time, but the place to find the event's significance or truth was in conjunction with the blinding of Constantine. The indiction referred to a cyclical fifteen-year tax cycle—after the fifteenth year the count would restart—which was used to date administrative documents in the Byzantine empire. However, AM 6289 (our AD 796/7) was not Indiction 9 but Indiction 5; Indiction 9 was in fact our AD 800, the correct year of Charlemagne's coronation.

66   Ὁ δὲ προσφυγὼν τῷ ῥηγὶ τῶν Φράγγων Καρούλῳ, ἠμύνατο τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῦ πικρῶς καὶ πάλιν ἀπεκατέστησεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον θρόνον, γενομένης τῆς Ῥώμης ἀπ' ἐκείνου καιροῦ ὑπὸ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῶν Φράγγων. MS 649 / dB 472.27–473.4.

her duty to the city of Rome and to persecute her son.[67] The empress Irene was made to look like the murderous relatives of Pope Hadrian. Charlemagne's rescue of the embattled and blinded pope was the foil to Irene's sin of filicide. The out-of-place events allowed readers to consider a recurring theme: the greed for absolute power to which Irene had succumbed.

However, this was also Irene's turning point. From this moment of crisis Irene did not fulfill the model of Herakleios or Leo III. Instead, she began to follow the model for repentance from the reign of Pulcheria and Theodosios II. To understand this aspect of Irene's portrayal it is necessary to note some previous models in this type from the *Chronicle*'s account of the Justinianic dynasty. This sixth-century dynasty began with the emperor Justin I.[68] Justin's successor, his famous nephew Justinian I was frequently noted as "most pious."[69] Like the images we have already seen, Justinian was seen as being supported and advised by his empress the "most pious" Theodora.[70] The great crisis in Justinian's reign was the so-called Three Chapter Controversy in which, from around AD 543 (or as late as AD 546), Justinian attempted to bring about

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67   In Greek literature juxtaposition such as this was used to invite readers to make comparative judgment (*synkrisis*), as in in the *Lives* of the late antique author Plutarch. Without telling the reader how to compare them, the technique required the reader to make meaning out of associations. In his work Plutarch placed carefully selected biographies of Greek and Latin historical figures side by side and so referred to his work as οἱ βίοι οἱ παραλλήλοι—*The Parallel Live*s. C. J. R. Kelly, "Synkrisis in Plutarch's Lives," in *Miscellanea Plutarchea: Atti Del 1. Convegno Di Studi Su Plutarco (Roma, 23 Novembre 1985)*, ed. Frederick E. Brenk and Italo Gallo, Quaderni del Giornale filologico ferrarese 8 (Ferrara: Giornale filologico ferrarese, 1986), 83–96; Timothy E. Duff, "The Structure of the Plutarchan Book," *Classical Antiquity* 30, no. 2 (2011): 213–78, especially 252–253. At p. 232, Duff describes the use of parallelism as "a convergence between theme and chronology." In the *Chronicle* this technique is usually signaled by breaks in chronological order. Since Charles' crowning was also later placed under the correct annual entry, we can be confident the interventions were purposeful and invited *synkrisis* on the part of the reader.

68   The *Chronicle* presents this founder quite partially, making Justin the emphatic opposite of the emperors who had preceded him, Zeno (who "administered the empire harmfully" MS 186 / dB 120 [AM 5966]) and Anastasios (a miaphysite "who ruled wickedly" MS 206 / dB 134 [AM 5982], MS 208 / dB 135 [AM 5983]). Justin even recalls "all who had been unjustly exiled by Anastasios." MS 260 /dB 166 (AM 6016). This allowed the *Chronicle* to completely absolve Justin of involvement in the murder of Vitalian. MS 251n4: "It is noteworthy that Theophanes makes the union of these champions of orthodoxy [Justin and Vitalian] the first item in his account of Justin (AM 6012) where he deliberately separates Justin from any involvement in the murder of Vitalian."

69   For example, MS 341 / dB 233.1–2 (AM 6051 [AD 558/9]).

70   For example, MS 285 / dB 186 (AM 6025): "Theodora, the most pious Augusta, journeyed to the hot springs of Pythia ... She showed much liberality to the churches, poorhouses, and monasteries."

unity by "anathematizing" (prohibiting from citation) three sets of writings by, respectively, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa. The *Chronicle* saw this as an ill-advised means of bringing about a good end, the universal acceptance of the declarations of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.

Theodora, as Justinian's advisor, had made her last act an attempt to re-establish unity between the emperor and the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople by convincing Pope Vigilius to accept Justinian's edict of condemnation.[71] This apparently achieved, Theodora's death was described in the narrative section marked by AM 6036 (her actual year of death is an "In this year …" entry of this same section, noted by de Boor as AM 6040).[72] After Theodora's death Justinian I proves unable to retain unity in the empire.[73] Following in the image of Constantine, at the very end of his life he too falls prey to a divisive doctrine.[74]

Like Constantine I with Constantius, Justinian left his successor Justin II destined to follow down the path of an empire-dividing heresy. Instead, the *Chronicle* depicts the emperors immediately following Justinian in the imperial types of Theodosios II. The mold of Constantine is initially broken in favor of that of Theodosios II by the succession not following a direct familial line. In addition, the first three post-Justinian emperors—Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice—together turn the imperium to repentance and change, instead of persisting in error. This repentance comes about in the following manner. Though noted as "pious,"[75] Justin II sins by creating division with his brother at the end of his reign.[76] In the very entry where this is noted, Justin is

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71   MS 327–28 / dB 225 is an "In this year …" entry, marked by de Boor as AM 6039.

72   MS 329 / dB 226.

73   The resurrection of the Three Chapters as an issue for this post-Theodora period is also noted obliquely under the narrative section of AM 6042, the "In this year …" that is de Boor's AM 6045 (MS 334 / dB 228–29). This is the first narrative division after the death of Theodora, thus implicitly attaching her absence from the emperor's councils with this decree, even though as we have seen Justinian certainly issued the edict while Theodora was still alive.

74   "The emperor Justinian, after raising the doctrine of Corruptibility and Incorruptibility and issuing an edict to all places that was contrary to piety, with God acting in time, died on 14 November of the following 14th indiction, having reigned 38 years, 7 months, and 13 days." MS 354 / dB 240.31–241.4. As C. Mango and R. Scott note, the *Chronographia* here clearly works freely with the chronology to associate this edict with the moment of Justinian's death, which did not actually occur until the "following 14th indiction," meaning the next year. MS 354n3.

75   MS 355 / dB 241 (AM 6058).

76   MS 364 / dB 246 (AM 6065).

chastised by his chief advisor, the empress Sophia. His response is to repent.[77] When Justin II lays dying and passes the empire to his adopted son Tiberius, he emphasizes both this action and right relations with the continuing queen (Sophia) as essential to good governance. In Justin II's speech, the exemplary imperial behaviors I identified under Theodosius and Pulcheria are prominent, especially the idea of repenting and suffering for one's errors.[78] Tiberius' reign was cut short by accidental poisoning from bad mulberries, but the reign of the emperor Maurice picks up the trajectory of repentance.

Maurice's reign begins well but quickly deteriorates when Maurice makes military decisions which the *Chronographia* attributes to greed: refusing to pay tribute to a foreign power. This misplaced frugality means "much hatred was stirred up against the emperor Maurice and they began to hurl abuse at him. So, also, the army in Thrace was stirred to abuse the emperor."[79] Then "the People" began to mock Maurice and predict his murder.[80] Maurice, however, followed the repentant type of Theodosius (just exemplified again by Justin II) and asked for atonement for his greed.[81]

Maurice then errs again, and again chooses repentance. He becomes paranoid that his brother-in-law Philippikos would seek to murder and overthrow him. He nearly has Philippikos executed only to, once again, repent.[82] Nevertheless, Maurice proves unable to stick to the path of repentance.[83]

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77   ὁ δὲ μετεμελήθη. MS 364 / dB 246.15 (AM 6065).

78   The speech can in fact be read as a summary of the imperial ethic of the entire *Chronicle*. 'Honor [this rank] that you be honored by it. Honor your mother who was previously your queen. You know that first you were her slave but now you are her son…. Do not become like me in enmity; for I have erred like a man. And having erred, I have received according to my sins…. Let those who have possessions enjoy them; be bountiful to those who have none.' … When the gathering had been dismissed, Tiberius distributed gifts to his subjects and everything else that is customary at imperial proclamations. MS 368–69 / dB 248.20–249.11 (AM 6070).

79   MS 404 / dB 280.10–11 (AM 6092).

80   MS 408 / db 283 (AM 6093).

81   MS 410 / dB 284–85 (AM 6094).

82   MS 410–11 / dB 285–86.

83   "Having made supplication in writing, sent them to all the patriarchal thrones and to all communities subject to him, and to the monasteries, both those in the desert and in Jerusalem, and to the lavras, with gifts of money and candles and incense, so that they would pray for him so that he might make atonement here and not in the time that is to come." MS 410 / dB 284 (AM 6094) A second instance at MS 411 / dB 286 for which, according to Mango and Scott (p. 416, note 24), "Theophanes' source here is perhaps still John of Antioch." Or perhaps a hagiography of Maurice similar to the Syriac hagiography of him edited and translated by François Nau, *Patrologia Orientalis* 5 (1910) 773–78. Nevertheless, there are no proven sources for the account of either of these acts of repentance, it being quite possible that the chronographer constructed them for the sake of his narrative theme.

He makes an accusation of usurpation for the third time—now against his father-in-law Germanos—even as the actual usurper-to-be Phokas is gathering troops outside the walls at the suburban palace complex of the Hebdomon.[84]

All of this is glossed by the *Chronographia* through the mouth of Peter, Maurice's capable and loyal general who predicts Maurice's downfall saying:

> The emperor's orders that the Romans should winter in foreign territory are excessively difficult for me. For it is wrong to disobey and worse to obey.
>
> Avarice (φιλαργυρία) gives birth to nothing good, but is the mother of all evils. Since the emperor is sick with this [avarice], he is become the cause of the greatest evils to the Romans.[85]

Maurice's repentance surely was the correct model for staving off evil, but the damage had been done. The patriarch Germanos refuses to anoint a rival emperor to Phokas, and so the *Chronicle* ominously proclaims: "disaster overcame prosperity and the great misfortunes of the Romans began." Maurice is allowed to die suffering honorably for his sins,[86] but the *Chronicle* emphasizes that this does not change the course set for the empire: "From that moment calamities that were both manifold and extraordinary did not cease in the empire of the Romans."[87]

This near apocalyptic introduction to the reign of the subsequent emperor, the so-called usurper Phokas, is coherent in the context of the grand narrative of the *Chronicle*. Phokas is presented as a greedy tyrant along the lines of Galerius or Julian. And we have already seen how his successor, Herakleios, would begin with a glorious revival of the image of Constantine I but in the end would be presented in an imperial type which would be fulfilled in the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V. The path of repentance offered by Justin II was a way of breaking the progress of these negative typologies that the *Chronicle* had established. Nevertheless, Maurice showed the limits of the repentant emperor. There was a moment when it was too late to change the course of empire, even though the emperor might reform his soul. The *Chronicle*'s description of the final portion of Irene's reign (table 6.3, nos. 11–19) was built on the interpretative logic established by these earlier imperial portraits.

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84   MS 412–14 / dB 287–290.

85   MS 411 / dB 286.29–287.2.

86   MS 414 / dB 289–90.

87   MS 414 / dB 290. Noting again that though this passage is a quotation in parts from another source (Theophylact Simocatta), the *Chronographia* has added in its own phrasing. The narrative here is constructed to be internally coherent.

5   Irene the Repentant Martyr

After the tragic death of Irene's son Constantine VI, everything comes to a crisis. However, to make sense of how the crisis unfolds in the narrative of the *Chronicle* it is necessary to bear in mind how the text had used one of its much earlier entries (under Constantine V) to create a typology through which to understand the reign of Irene. This type was one of a liberal and generous empress and signalled by the veneration of St. Euphemia. I have already demonstrated (section 2) how the *Chronicle* used references to St. Euphemia's legacy during the joint reign of Pulcheria and Theodosius II to make their image into one defined by martyrdom, imperial piety, and repentance. The references to St. Euphemia in the *Chronicle* prior to the reign of Irene which accomplish this are: the usurper Gaïnas swearing a false oath with emperor Arkadios at the church of St. Euphemia in Chalcedon (AM 5894 or AD 401/2); Euphemia's relics being transported to Alexandria in the context of Theodosius II coming to power (AM 5932 or AD 439/40); and, the Council of Chalcedon being celebrated at her martyrion, newly built by Pulcheria (AM 5944 or AD 451/2).[88]

After these events but well before Irene's reign—during the reign of Constantine V under de Boor's AM 6258 (AD 765/6)—readers reencounter St. Euphemia when they are told that Irene oversaw the rediscovery of the relics of St. Euphemia in the company of the authorial persona (whether this is the historical George or Theophanes is not explicit). The story of the rediscovery of Euphemia's body is most obviously told to condemn Constantine V as the "Forerunner to the Antichrist" through his treatment of her sanctified body. According to the *Chronicle*, Constantine V was so incensed that relics of the saints inspired prayers for their intercession that he took up the reliquary of St. Euphemia and cast it into the sea. By casting Euphemia's holy body into the Bosporos, Constantine V demonstrated his rejection not only of the saintly martyr Euphemia, but of the council of Chalcedon which Euphemia had facilitated through the empress Pulcheria's newly-build martyrion.

The other significance of Euphemia's reappearance here in the narrative of the eighth century is to make an implicit association between the two empresses who venerated Euphemia: Irene and the work's ideal imperial portrait, Pulcheria. The chronicler makes these connections by breaking from the historical moment of Constantine V's attempted destruction of Euphemia's relics (in AM 6258 or AD 765/6) to immediately state that the relics had been lost from that moment *into his own day*. The chronicler then adds that in his own time he himself saw these very relics miraculously recovered. That is, in the

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88   MS 117 / dB 76 (AM 5894); MS 149 / dB 95 (AM 5932); MS 163 / dB 105 (AM 5944).

fourth indiction under the joint rule of Constantine VI and Irene (in AM 6288 or AD 795/6), this very reliquary of Euphemia was discovered washed up on the shores of Lemnos and was returned to Constantinople.

> I myself saw this ... twenty-two years after the criminal [Constantine V]'s death ... in the company of the most pious emperors and Tarasios the most holy patriarch and, along with them, I kissed it, unworthy as I was to have been granted so signal a grace.[89]

I will discuss the significance of this statement for our understanding of the authorial persona and what it tells us about the network behind the *Chronographia* project in chapter 8. For now the importance of this passage lies in associating Constantine VI, the empress Irene, the patriarch Tarasios, and the authorial persona (and so the impetus of the whole project) with veneration of St. Euphemia.

The manner in which the *Chronicle* conveys the story of the rediscovery of Euphemia's relics serves as a preface for the account of the empress Irene that will eventually follow. I can make this assertion because we have a surviving material artefact—known today as the Trier ivory—that demonstrates the *Chronicle* was not alone in using historical typology or figuration to turn Irene's patronage of St. Euphemia into an image which explained the significance of her reign. As we will see, the visual cues from the Trier ivory work with the exact same network of associations which the *Chronicle* used to unite Irene with Pulcheria and St. Euphemia.

The Trier ivory is an ivory carving now preserved at the Museum am Dom at Trier (figure 6.4). It is generally accepted that this is a ninth-century work and that it depicts a procession conveying a reliquary from the imperial palace in Constantinople (denoted by the bust icon of Christ above the Chalke gate) to a church where an empress awaits. It is generally agreed that this is not a generic procession but a depiction of a specific historical event. It has been argued that this is a ninth-century depiction of the empress Pulcheria's fifth-century translation of the relics of St. Stephen to the church newly built for him at the Daphne Palace.[90] More recently, and more convincingly in my opinion, P. Niewöhner has argued that the ivory depicts the story of Irene's re-discovery

89   MS 607–8 / dB 440 (AM 6258).
90   See discussion and bibliography in: Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 132–35 and 347–48.

FIGURE 6.4   Trier Ivory, Treasury of Museum am Dom Trier (Trier, Germany)
PHOTOGRAPH IMAGE BY MS. ANN MÜNCHOW

and re-translation of St. Euphemia's body which we have just been discussing.[91] In this reading the reliquary of Euphemia is being processed to meet Empress Irene, who is bearing a cross and waiting at the newly-consecrated Church of St. Euphemia, which she had renovated for the express purpose of housing the relics.[92] We cannot know exactly when the Trier ivory was carved. Nevertheless, its very existence and survival indicate the ideological significance of Irene's rediscovery of the relics of St. Euphemia and her subsequent rebuilding of the dedicatory church just outside of the hippodrome.

The competing interpretations of this ivory in fact emphasize the exact same point we have found in the text of the *Chronicle*: Irene is presented in the image of Pulcheria.[93] Likely the reason historians have seen both events as possible readings is that our surviving narrative of Irene's devotion to Euphemia was explicitly crafted to fulfill the figure established by Pulcheria. For just as Pulcheria had built a martyrion for Euphemia at Chalcedon, Irene

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91   Philip Niewöhner's recent argument takes Leslie Brubaker's side (in opposition to Paul Speck and Marie-France Auzépy) in holding that the ivory should be dated to the reign of Irene on the basis of the Chalke icon's presence in the carving. Neither the later reign of Theodora (AD 842–856), nor an earlier period in the same century (since during the reign of Leo III there actually *was* no Chalke icon to take down) fit as well as Irene. Niewöhner, "Historisch-Topographische Überlegungen," 268–69, 275–76.

92   Niewöhner, "Historisch-Topographische Überlegungen," 269.

93   Note also that later Constantinopolitan liturgical calendars canonized this association by marking the feasts of Saint Pulcheria and Saint Irene on the same day.

was now the fulfillment of Pulcheria's type, building a church for her miraculously translated relics in Constantinople itself. Insofar as the Trier Ivory and the *Chronographia* project are both associated with support of Irene, this typology must have been a key component of her own political identity and propaganda. The ivory makes possible, even invites, the conflation of the two empresses.[94]

Without the Trier Ivory we might be tempted to read the *Chronicle*'s notice of the *synkellos* being present for Euphemia's rediscovery as a minor event—of interest only as a personal anecdote. However, P. Niewöhner's discussion also highlights that this depiction must be read as an *adventus*, fully in line with the liturgical referents of an imperial procession to celebrate military victory.[95] The rediscovery of St. Euphemia and her newly built church was *the* imperial-ecclesiastical event of the turn of the ninth century. The authorial persona of the *Chronicle*—in this case most likely the *synkellos* George—was there. Our author would not only have been one of the first to place his lips upon the saint, but one of the first to meditate on the significance of this moment of past-in-the-present, of Irene's procession as a mirror historical image of the great empress Pulcheria, bound together by their shared veneration of St. Euphemia.

We can now return to the actual reign of Irene in the *Chronicle* and see how the text fashions Irene into not only a model emperor but a martyr from the moral low point of her reign, the blinding of her own son. The entry containing both de Boor's AM 6290 and 6291 (table 6.3, no. 16) emphasizes a theme we have already seen multiple times: the Empire experienced disunity because its ruler trusted in divisive advisors. Here Staurakios and Aëtios are both described as "bosom friends of the empress"[96] but vie with each other for power and influence. Additionally, the sons of Constantine V continue to pose threats to Irene, first from Constantinople and then from banishment in Athens. And as Abd al-Malik ("Abimelech" in the *Chronographia*) engages in raids against Christians which the Romans are unable to prevent, Irene falls ill to the point of death.

Irene's recovery proves to be a resurrection. From the first entry thereafter (table 6.3, no. 17), Irene is once again called "pious." She holds an imperial

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94   The iconographic interchangeability between these two figures is consonant with Stratis Papaioannou's argument to think about historical accounts of emperors as images or portraits. Stratis Papaioannou, "Byzantine Historia," in *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 297–313.

95   Niewöhner, "Historisch-Topographische Überlegungen," 270–72.

96   MS 650–51 / dB 473 (AM 6290).

silentium council to force Staurakios out of power, and publicly places her trust in the advice of Aëtios. Staurakios' attempt at an armed revolt ends with his death, complete with "a bloody froth from his mouth that came from the organs around his chest and lungs." In the next entry (no. 18), Charlemagne's coronation as "emperor of the Romans" leads to a re-opening of marriage negotiations between the two dynasties, this time directly between Charlemagne and Irene. The "pious" Irene now begins to suddenly apply the sort of fiscal generosity that we saw was characteristic of the best emperors of the past.

Irene enacted a grant of tax relief to Constantinopolitan monastic institutions.[97] Furthermore, she revoked both the urban taxes on Constantinople as a whole, as well as the taxes on imports in the *kommerkia* trade centers.[98] However, the "most pious" Irene continued to have her good designs thwarted. The emissaries of Charlemagne, accompanied by those of Pope Leo, are prevented by Aëtios (with his allies) from having access to Irene because he wants to inhibit her marriage to Charlemagne. The *Chronicle* seems to view potential marriage to Charlemagne as something parallel to Pulcheria's marriage to Maurice—a chance for the empress to gain a protective guardian from the machinations of Aëtios and others like him. Ultimately the marriage is described as desirable not only because of Charlemagne himself but because it would have reunited the divided οἰκουμένη by bringing the pope back into communion with the emperor. Nevertheless, Irene could not rid herself of Aëtios. The eunuch's power plays pushed the other officials of the empire past what they could bear. In the next entry—in *PG 1710* denoted by an "In this year ..." but by de Boor as AM 6295—the reign of Irene is brought to an end by one of the empire's most powerful officials, Nikephoros the *logothetes* of the *Genikon* (the imperial treasury).

While Irene continues to be described as "most pious," Nikephoros' usurpation is immediately set not only in moral and providential terms but in negative scriptural types. The revolt is explained as God's judgment upon the Romans as a whole, "permitted because of the multitude of our sins." Irene is then given the crown of martyr that had already been implicitly placed on her son's head:

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97   See MS 669n7.

98   MS 653 / dB 475 (AM 6293). The "private" church—the network of especially suburban monasteries—had also been strongly favored, patronized, and protected by Irene. The odd ambiguity that I note in discussion of the Fourth Evil of Nikephoros in chapter 7 might be explained if the chronographers intended their comments as a blanket condemnation of Nikephoros' complete reversal of the trajectory of Irene's policies.

> Men who lived a pious and reasonable life wondered at God's judgment, namely how He had permitted a woman who had suffered like a martyr on behalf of the true faith to be ousted by a swineherd and that her closest friends should have joined him out of cupidity.[99]

Irene herself understands her life in this way, for when Nikephoros approaches her, demanding her retirement and her handing over the entire treasury to himself "just as Judas," she states:

> The cause of my downfall I attribute to myself and to my sins and I cry out, 'In all things and in every manner may the name of the Lord be praised—the only King of kings and Lord of lords.'[100]

The "wise and God-loving" Irene is praised, as martyrs traditionally were, for bearing her suffering in a "manly" fashion since "she ought to have been overwhelmed by the misfortune of her sudden change (especially since she was a woman)." Her martyrdom is tragically witnessed by those who were waiting to save the empire: the still-present ambassadors of Charlemagne and Pope Leo hoping to negotiate the marriage alliance.

Outside the context of this rhetoric, it is difficult to understand the substance of Irene's claim to martyrdom. The only time she had been out of power was when Constantine confined her to the Eleutherios palace "with all of her fortune," which can hardly constitute death for the faith. Instead, the claim of martyr for Irene comes down to her "be it unto me" acceptance of the will of God, and her absolute lack of greed during Nikephoros' usurpation. When Nikephoros demands not only the public treasury but Irene's own fortune as well, she is recorded as stating, "I will not conceal anything from you, down to the last penny." The *Chronicle* concludes, "which, indeed, she did."[101] Nikephoros promises to exile Irene back to the Eleutherios palace, but then he sends her to the Prinkipios island in the Sea of Maramara only to dispatch her further to the island of Lesbos, fearful—so the *Chronicle*—that Irene's famous generosity will engender support for her return to the throne. Irene's fate, however, is to die on Lesbos ten months after she had been overthrown, on August ninth, in the eleventh indiction (AD 803).

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99   MS 655 / dB 476–77.
100   MS 656 / dB 478.4–9.
101   MS 657 / dB 478.

6   Mothers, Sons, and Repentance

Chapter 5 examined a series of negative imperial portraits over the course of the *Chronicle* in which the primary accusation against these emperors was impiety. We saw that this impiety was not defined by doctrine so much as by greed. Even the worst of the emperors we have seen—the Isaurians for instance—were not denigrated as "heretics" by the *Chronicle*. An emperor succumbing to heretical thinking or permitting heretics to hold power contributed to the case for their "impiety," but religious heresies were only a part of a broader ethic of impiety that focused much more damningly on greed. Furthermore, when good emperors made errors of "impiety" it was in unwise decisions such as when Theodosios II turned on his own good advisors. Good emperors struggled to repent of their errors whereas impious emperors encouraged and furthered bad thinking of all kinds. In the next chapter we will see this borne out in the image of the "All-Devourer" Nikephoros I. Nikephoros I was not guilty of a single heretical declaration or propensity, but he was castigated by the *Chronicle* for an indelibly impious way of ruling.

In this chapter we have seen the other side of the coin in which the paradigmatic portrait of Pulcheria was the ideal. Pulcheria's "pious" rule showed "true faith" in the sense that she trusted bishops to decide matters of theology. Pulcheria's "piety" meant surrounding herself with good counselors and marrying Maurice to avoid being controlled by advisors who had ambitions to promote their own families. Above all Pulcheria was liberally generous, constantly giving away the wealth of the imperial treasury. Irene, the empress whom the *Chronicle* presented as its last model ruler, finally came to embody such liberality. Irene imitated Constantine I's donations to churches in her generosity towards the *ecclesia*, and she gave tax remissions to all of her subjects.

If the historical image of Pulcheria was the model of one ideal of perfection, the portrait of the just-deceased empress Irene was a paradigm of the dynamism of the repentant emperor. Historically, while Pulcheria was in "complete control over governmental affairs" she must have dirtied her hands, but the *Chronicle* was able to present her as perfect: she was a historically *distant* mirror. Where Pulcheria exemplified other-worldly holiness in power, Irene was a different image of a good ruler not *despite*, but *because of*, her flaws.

Irene was no Pulcheria, but she was an alternative to the Forerunner to the Antichrist, Constantine V, and to the "All-Devourer" who followed her, Nikephoros I. While Nikephoros was evil and impious, Irene's piety did not mean perfection. The name of Irene's son, Constantine VI, and her violence against him recalls the very sins of Constantine I who is said to have had his

own son Crispus put to death. The interwoven imperial types of the *Chronicle* required interpretative work because Irene, like Constantine I before her, was presented as powerful, pious, and wrong. I have shown that the *Preface* invited readers to find something useful, to interpret its contents. In light of this evidence the reign of Irene can justifiably be read as a *speculum principis*, a mirror in which the actual princes of its own day might see themselves and so repent and reform.

The image of Irene was a lesson for the ninth-century reader: the end of days was coming "on account of our sins." In Irene the *Chronicle* thus gave its audience an image formed for the present. In the next chapter we will see how the *Chronicle*'s structure in *PG 1710* interwove the reigns of Irene and Nikephoros. Irene's story flowed right into that of Nikephoros, but the reader was not forced to decide what to make of her portrait until just after the account of Nikephoros' Ten Evils, in the conclusion to AM 6302 (Nikephoros' eighth year). It was there that the *Chronicle* showed the true opposition between the "piety and patronage" (εὐσέβεια καὶ εὐεργεσία) characteristic of Irene's imperial portrait and the "evil and avarice" (κακία τε καὶ φιλαργυρία) characteristic of Nikephoros. The best the Romans could hope to do was hold off the evils of such greed, and the only way to do that was through imperial repentance. For that, Irene had shown the way.

Nikephoros the All-Devourer

The *Chronicle* criticizes Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) more directly and stridently than any other emperor. In this chapter I explain that critique as the first end, or purpose of the entire *Chronographia* project. Scholars today, however, have largely rejected the *Chronicle*'s assessment of Nikephoros' reign, in which he is portrayed as the very image of the Antichrist. They have worked to read past this virulent criticism, evaluating the emperor by our modern standards for effective rule and so have determined Nikephoros to be "an efficient but severe ruler" who all but saved the Byzantine state.[1] In doing so scholars have left the critique in the *Chronicle* unexplained. Why would a contemporary account denigrate this effective ruler so forcefully? In this chapter I explain why contemporary authors, and presumably their immediate audience, viewed the orthodox emperor Nikephoros I as so evil that he was made to be the polemical focus of the entire order of past time. First, I take the rhetoric against Nikephoros on its own terms by working carefully through the exact critiques and statements of the *Chronicle*'s invective. I then connect the literary structure of the *Chronicle*'s account of the reign of Nikephoros to the overall argument of the work in terms of the typological logic of the First-Created Day thesis, and the ethic of rulership established through the images of earlier emperors. All of this sets up this book's final chapters in which the social and political logic of the *Chronicle*'s concluding imperial portraits amount to a coherent agenda for the group by and for whom the invective against Nikephoros I was first written.

In the entry on Nikephoros' accession, AM 6295 (AD 802), the *Chronicle* describes how Nikephoros seized power from Irene by referring to him via an epithet: the All-Devourer (ὁ παμφάγος).[2] This title is used of Nikephoros in only one other place: the entry for AM 6302 (AD 810). These two uses of the epithet ὁ παμφάγος are both the thesis and the structural bookends for Nikephoros' era. That era begins by claiming Nikephoros I is the All-Devourer and builds up to the revolts against him under his fifth, sixth, and seventh years (AM 6299–6301

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1   Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 359; Pavlos E. Niavis, *The Reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I.* (*AD 802–811*) = *Hē Basileia tou Byzantinou Autokratora Nikēphorou I* (*802–811 m. Ch.*), Historikes Monographies 3 (Athens: Basilopoulos, 1987).

2   MS 656–57 / dB 477.18–479.10. Nikephoros is ὁ παμφάγος at dB 477.32 and 478.29.

or AD 807–809). It concludes by justifying the title All-Devourer under his eighth year (AM 6302 or AD 809/10) where a catalogue of "Ten Evils" depicted him as the fulfillment of the type of the Pharaoh of the Book of Exodus. The complete set piece concludes with the parable of Nikephoros' encounter with a *keroullarios* (candle-maker). In the process, the *Chronicle* made Nikephoros the fulfillment of its "impious" imperial antitype, not because of his lack of religious devotion or even his religious policies, but because of his propensity to greed (πλεονεξία or φιλαργυρία), which led to bad policies in domestic and foreign affairs, and especially to over-taxation and the use of the imperial treasury as a personal hoard. Nikephoros did not fulfill the type of the evil emperor because of any heretical declaration but because his impious way of ruling as the All-Devourer amounted to attacks on all Romans and on the unity of the Empire itself.[3]

What did the *Chronicle* mean by calling Nikephoros I the All-Devourer, the παμφάγος eater-of-everything? The *Chronicle* introduced the term in a group of phrases that signal Nikephoros was terrible in a specific manner. Nikephoros came to the throne as a "usurper" or "just as Judas had betrayed the Lord after dining with him." He attained power because "God in His inscrutable judgment … permitted this because of the multitude of our sins," and so the Romans were ruled by "a swineherd" with an "innate wickedness and avarice." These are not random accusations. Under AM 6302 (AD 810) Nikephoros was specifically "inventive in all manner of greed," and these pejoratives emphasize this vice: the swineherd of the gospels is inherently greedy, employing a laborer for so little that he craves the pig slop;[4] and, Judas was a traitor to Christ because

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3   Though this deeply ethical critique of imperial power animates the central concerns of the *Chronicle*, this does not make the work a product of "the church" any more than all articulations of imperial power in Byzantium drew deeply upon the types and models found in scripture and the liturgy. On the use of Old Testament imagery to articulate ideals of imperial power under the Isaurian emperors, see: M. T. G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era: c. 680–850*, OSB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). G. Dagron standardized the inseparable relationship between emperor and church, between οἰκουμένη and ἐκκλησία. Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Furthermore, we completely misunderstand Constantinople if we do not recognize the liturgical implications of the office of emperor. Robert F. Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley, CA: InterOrthodox Press, 2006).

4   The parable of the prodigal son is told in the Gospel according to Luke 15:11–32. Verses 14–16 describe the swineherd: "And when [the prodigal son] had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything."

he sold information about his lord for thirty pieces of silver.[5] Greed, the primary imperial sin in the entire work, is set in direct opposition to the liberality, generosity, mercy, and ultimately repentance which we have seen characterize the positive imperial types of the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* thus uses the title All-Devourer to focus the reader's attention on the entries AM 6295–6302 as a coherent invective against Nikephoros' greed.

1   The Transition from Irene to Nikephoros: AM 6295–6296 (AD 802–804)

In this section, I depart somewhat from the method of the previous two chapters. This is in part because the end of *PG 1710* is damaged, and the text of the *Chronicle* for most of the reign of emperor Nikephoros I is missing therein. This means that it is impossible to know exactly how the reign of Nikephoros might have been subdivided as we have seen so far—through the use of AM headings to indicate narrative subdivisions. Nevertheless, we still possess the beginning of Nikephoros' reign in *PG 1710*, and the one structural fact that can still be noted from this beginning is significant. In *PG 1710* the reign of Nikephoros blends into that of his predecessor Irene: there are no marked AM entries to create narrative divisions between the two. We have seen this same sort of blending of two reigns once before, in the transition between Theodosios II and Maurice. As there, *PG 1710* merely provides a header in the top margin to note the transition into the era of Nikephoros.[6] Without so much as a line break the text flows as though in one continuous story from the era of Irene into the era of Nikephoros (de Boor's AM 6295 moving directly into de Boor's AM 6296).

Nikephoros' first actions upon gaining control of the empire are thus described in the same entry as Irene's speech of repentance and capitulation, considered in the previous chapter (recorded under de Boor's AM 6295). The account of Nikephoros unjustly seizing power from Irene moves directly into the revolt of Bardanes Tourkos, and then moves back to Irene to record Nikephoros deceiving her just before her death, and finally ends the story with

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5 Gospel according to Matthew 26:15.

6 This is another connection between the portraits of the empresses Irene and Pulcheria. Pulcheria's continued reign from her role under her brother Theodosios II to her role as empress under Maurice was the reason for disrupting the normal narrative division between the eras of those emperors.

how Nikephoros turned from the coronation of his son to deceive and blind Bardanes.

Leading up to this moment Irene had been portrayed as a generous martyr-empress. Nikephoros was immediately framed as the antithesis to this portrait. Nikephoros first urges Irene to not hide the location of any treasure, glossed as a sign he was possessed by the "vice of avarice" (τῆς φιλαργυρίας τὸ πάθος).[7] Nikephoros "the Universal Devourer, was terribly sick with [the vice], setting all his hopes in gold."[8] After Irene had given her speech of acquisition, Nikephoros' own reign begins and he is again described as the "Universal Devourer" (ὁ παμφάγος).[9] The thesis of the account is then stated: Nikephoros used performance, or deception (ὑποκρίσις), to hide his "innate wickedness and avarice" (κακία and φιλαργυρία).[10]

The first proof of these characteristics is given immediately: Nikephoros' formation of a judicial appeals court at the Magnaura or Great Hall. The Magnaura court was an imperial tribunal in a public-facing hall or throne room of the palace set up to replace the civic judicial court of the *quaestor*. Listing this action first set up a knowing Constantinopolitan reader to make a connection between the formation of this court and the later rebellion by Arsaber the *quaestor* in AD 808. But at first glance it is a strange example to be the leading proof of all-consuming greed.[11] The *Chronicle* makes the argument that by bringing judicial procedures which previously took place outside of the imperial complex within it, the Magnaura court was "evil and unjust." Its purpose was "not to give the poor their due ... but to dishonor and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything, which, indeed, [Nikephoros] did."[12] Then, though she seems to have nothing to do with the Magnaura court, the *Chronicle* reminds readers of Irene by noting at this moment that Nikephoros banished Irene to the island of Lesbos because he feared those who might miss "the liberalities of the pious Irene."[13] Thus, the *Chronicle* argues that the institution of the court of the Magnaura did

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7 MS 656 / dB 477.30.

8 ἐνόσει γὰρ αὐτὸ δεινῶς πάσας ἐν τῷ χρυσῷ τιθεὶς τὰς ἐλπίδας ὁ παμφάγος. MS 656 / dB 477.31.

9 MS 657 / dB 478.29.

10 ὁ γοῦν παμφάγος οὗτος τοῦ κράτους ἐπιλαβόμενος οὐδὲ κἂν πρὸς βραχὺ ἴσχυσεν ἐπικαλύψαι δι' ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ κακίαν τε καὶ φιλαργυρίαν. MS 657 / dB 478 29–31. The use of ὑποκρίσις (*hypocrisy*) may well be an invocation of the "scribes and pharisees" opposed to Christ in Gospel according to Matthew 23:27–28.

11 The *quaestor* would have been the official most directly impacted by Nikephoros subsuming the job of the *quaestor* into the imperial bureaucracy.

12 MS 657 / dB 479.

13 τὰς τῆς εὐσεβοῦς Εἰρήνης εὐεργεσίας. MS 675 / dB 479.4–5.

away with the specific political virtues which had redeemed the latter part of Irene's reign.

By beginning the narrative of Nikephoros' reign in this way the *Chronicle* associated opposition to any of Nikephoros' policies with Irene's legacy. The text immediately provided a figure to carry on the legacy of opposition to Nikephoros in the person of Bardanes Tourkos. Just after Irene had been deposed, in July of 803, Bardanes Tourkos (the *strategos* or governor-general of the *Anatolikon Thema*) was proclaimed emperor not only by his own *thema* but by all of Asia Minor. Bardanes attempted to refuse, but the army insisted and brought him to the capital. According to the *Chronicle*, the residents of Constantinople were much less enthusiastic about Bardanes than were his soldiers.[14] However, instead of attacking the City and taking the throne by force, Bardanes retired to the nearby military encampment of Malagina.[15] There he declared that without the peaceful capitulation of the city he would not proceed against Nikephoros. He was "filled with the fear of God" and determined that "a massacre of Christians should not occur on his account." Using Patriarch Tarasios as the intermediary, Bardanes acquired a promise from Nikephoros that "he would remain unharmed and unpunished together with all his companions."[16]

Staurakios, Nikephoros' son, is then contrasted with Bardanes. Staurakios is deemed "in all respects—in appearance, in vigor, and in temperament— unsuitable for this office" of emperor.[17] Nevertheless, once Nikephoros' unimpressive son was crowned, he immediately sent his men to Prote where they blinded the virtuous Bardanes in his retirement. In this, the *Chronicle* made its final connection between Bardanes and Irene by having both be victims of Nikephoros' lies.[18] The *Chronicle* emphasizes Bardanes' legitimacy

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14   They refused to support Bardanes against Nikephoros I. Though the *Chronographia* had just accused Nikephoros of being untrustworthy—for going back on his word to allow Irene to stay in Constantinople and instead exiling her to the Prince's Island of Prinkipios—in this context removing Irene from the City was certainly a prescient move on Nikephoros' part. Bardanes' rebellion would likely have gone differently if he and his armies could have appealed to a just-deposed empress still within the city.

15   In the Sangarius valley; the standard gathering point for the armies of the East in preparation for a campaign.

16   MS 657 / dB 479.

17   MS 659 / dB 480.

18   Nikephoros had just been accused of going back on his word to allow Irene to stay in Constantinople and instead exiling her to the Prince's Island of Prinkipios, only to exile her further to the island of Lesbos. Likewise, immediately upon Bardanes' accepting monastic tonsure at his own island monastery of Prote (modern Kınlaıda), It is worth noting that Irene had only just been removed from her own monastery on another of the

by specifically stating the blinding was to the horror of "the patriarch, the Senate, and all God-fearing people," so that the very groups which should have been making an imperial acclamation for Staurakios were instead mourning the would-be usurper.[19] That is, the *Chronicle* asserted Bardanes was humble and fit for office and was supported by a political consensus of *ecclesia*, *senatus*, and *populus* all revolted at the new dynasty's use of deceit and manipulation to satisfy its all-devouring greed.[20]

The connection between Irene and Bardanes was thus emphasized through juxtaposition, interweaving the story of her death within the story of his revolt. Irene's deposition and exile to Prinkipios precede Bardanes' revolt. Her further exile to Lesbos and death there come immediately after, and the blinding and confiscation of Bardanes' belongings concludes the sequence. In this way the *Chronicle* utilized multiple means to directly connect Bardanes' revolt with Irene's legacy and show that both favored pious liberality, and that both were victims of the lies of Nikephoros.

2 Nikephoros' Failures and a Growing Opposition: AM 6297–6301 (AD 804–809)

First, a note on the manuscript sources for this portion of the text. For this section and into my argument in chapter 8 (which considers the entries for AM 6303–6305 or what I will call the "coda" of the *Chronicle*), I must leave behind the discussion of the presentation of the text in *PG 1710* because the ending of that manuscript is damaged (leaving off on f. 397v at de Boor's page 479, line 13). Just as I did for the *lacunae* noted in chapter 5 and chapter 6, for this section and all of chapter 8 my argument will rely on the text as it is presented in *Wake Greek 5* and in *VG 155*, except that I will ignore the annual regnal notices and assume that in *PG 1710* these entries began with the customary "In this year" heading. As proven in the Introduction, the use of AM headings is remarkably consistent across the ninth-century Greek manuscripts, and so we can be highly confident that if *Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155* do not include an AM

"Prince's Islands," on Prinkipios (modern Büyükada). The *Chronicle* notes that Nikephoros broke that oath just as he had with Irene. Nikephoros had promised Bardanes to "not harm him in any respect," but he went on to seize Bardanes' fortune and oppress the officers and landowners of the *Themata*, the supporters of his revolt. MS 658 / dB 480.

19   MS 659 / dB 480. This political trifecta should not be taken as a literal historical fact but emphasizes that the abhorrence for Nikephoros' deed was felt by the entire political community of the empire.

20   MS 659–60 /dB 480–81.

heading, then neither did *PG 1710*. Unlike almost every previous imperial reign greater than a few years, the reign of Nikephoros I had no *annus mundi* entries for the reign of Nikephoros, including his first year. For the reasons just noted, this cannot be stated with absolute confidence for *PG 1710*. Nevertheless, since neither *Wake Greek 5* nor *VG 155* included AM headings for Nikephoros' reign, I am quite confident that the only divisions of Nikephoros' reign in the now-lost text of *PG 1710* must have been the "In this year" headings which, as I have shown, emphasize narrative continuity rather than narrative division. Based on this reasoning, in what follows I analyze the reign or era of Nikephoros as a single narrative piece (for ease of reference I note corresponding AM entries from K. de Boor's edition), and in doing so I believe that everything argued here would remain the case if we were to recover the lost portion of *PG 1710*.

Following is a sketch of the events that make up the *Chronicle*'s account of the first part of the reign of Nikephoros I. Just before Irene's death on August 9 (AD 803), the *Chronicle* had reflected on the deeds now to come: "Who would be able to narrate a fitting account of the works accomplished in these days by [Nikephoros] according to God's dispensation, because of our sins?"[21] Though a truly fitting account might not be possible, the *Chronicle* did try. It described the third through the seventh years of Nikephoros' reign as an image of the results of all-consuming greed. Ineffective campaigns, banishment of principled Romans, and instigation of suffering amongst Christians all lead to a quickly unravelling political community. These entries are bookended by images of Nikephoros promising mercy but instead meting out punishment: first to Bardas Tourkos, and in the end to his own exhausted army.

I have already described the sequence leading up to and immediately following the death of Irene in which Nikephoros had his son Staurakios crowned emperor, went back on his promises of clemency to Bardanes Tourkos, and had him blinded. Pretending to be sorrowful "he did not, however, deceive the majority of people." Nikephoros led an expedition into Asia Minor against the Arabs (AM 6296) but "lost many men and was himself on the point of being captured." He sent another expedition into Syria (AM 6297) but "returned after losing many men without achieving any success."[22]

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21   καὶ τίς λόγος δυνήσεται πρὸς ἀξίαν διηγήσασθαι τὰ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις πραχθέντα ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἔργα κατὰ θεοῦ παραχώρησιν διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν; MS 658 / dB 480. Compare Gospel according to John 21:25: "And there are many other things which Jesus did which, if they were written one-by-one, I do not believe the cosmos could contain the books that would be written." Ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ ἃ ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ἅτινα ἐὰν γράφηται καθ᾽ ἕν, οὐδ᾽ αὐτὸν οἶμαι τὸν κόσμον χωρῆσαι τὰ γραφόμενα βιβλία.

22   C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 661n3) clarify that based on other sources the expedition was most likely into Asia Minor again, into the region of Cilicia.

Patriarch Tarasios then died (AM 6298). The *asecretis* Nikephoros was appointed patriarch by Emperor Nikephoros. His appointment was opposed by the monks of St. John in Stoudios who had "planned a schism." Ever eager to promote division rather than create unity and stability, Emperor Nikephoros desired to dissolve their monastery and expel them but "was turned back by certain persons persuading" him otherwise (ἀνετράπη συμβουλευόντων τινῶν). Given the text's stance of measured opposition to the Stoudites it is a fair guess that these "certain persons" were part of the chronographers' political network, if not one of the chronographers themselves. Hārūn al-Rashīd ("Aaron" in the text) led a raiding party into Asia Minor (AM 6298) which captured five forts and built a mosque at Tyana. Nikephoros, "seized by fright and perplexity," led a raiding party in response. He achieved victories but the resulting treaty left Harun ar-Rashid "pleased and overjoyed, more than he would have been had he received ten thousand *talents*, because he had subjugated the Roman Empire (ὑποτάξας τὴν Ῥωμαίων Βασιλείαν)."[23]

Nikephoros had just set out for Bulgaria (AM 6299) when at Adrianople he learned of a revolt planned against him by imperial officials and the *tagmata* troops. Parallel to the defeat in the just-signed treaty, Nikephoros used the opportunity to undermine the empire. Nikephoros "accomplished nothing other than fighting off his fellow-countrymen, afflicting many with beatings, banishments, and confiscations."[24] Nikephoros then went on to round up immigrants (προσήλυτον) and renters (πάροικον)—presumably from Asia Minor—and bring them into Thrace.[25] He intended "to procure no little haul of gold out of them from yearly taxation."[26] The *Chronicle* emphasizes here that the theme is greed, surmising Nikephoros did "everything because of his love for gold, and not because of Christ."[27]

Harun ar-Rashid sent an expedition against the island of Rhodes (AM 6300) but was miraculously defeated by "a great disturbance of sea waves, thunder, and lightning" attributed to St. Nicholas of Myra. Nikephoros followed up on this marvel of divine protection with an abomination. He demanded a competition to find an empress for Staurakios, choosing Theophano of Athens (an already-married relative of empress Irene). During the wedding, Nikephoros "the abominable man, derided by all" (παρὰ πάντων ὁ μιαρὸς γελώμενος) openly

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23   MS 662 / dB 482.

24   δαρμοῖς τε καὶ ἐξορίαις καὶ δημεύσεσι πολλοὺς ὑποβαλών. MS 663 / dB 482.

25   MS 663 / dB 482.30–483.2.

26   οἰόμενος οὐκ ὀλίγην ὁλκὴν χρυσοῦ πορίσασθαι ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐξ ἐτησίων τελεσμάτων. MS 663 / dB 482.32–483.1. See the description of Nikephoros' First Evil, in section 4 below.

27   ὁ πάντα διὰ τὸν φιλούμενον αὐτῷ χρυσὸν καὶ οὐ διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν πράττων. MS 663 / dB 483.1–2.

seduced two other contestants.[28] Nikephoros then learned of a revolt planned against him by "the *quaestor* and patrician Arsaber" along with secular leaders and "holy bishops, monks, and [officials] of the Great church." This revolt is linked to that of the year before by describing the punishments in almost the same language: "afflicted with beatings, banishments, and confiscations."[29]

In a war of succession after Harun ar-Rashid's death there was great disruption to the entire caliphate (AM 6301). The *Chronicle* mentions this but focuses especially on Jerusalem's churches being made desolate and how "slaughter resulting from this anarchy" was directed "at each other and against us." The disruption of the Christian community extended to Constantinople. Without the mitigating counsel of the officials just punished as rebels, emperor Nikephoros found opportunity (ἀφορμή) to have the monks of St. John in Stoudios "driven out of their monastery and city into exile."[30]

Krum ("Kroummos") the Bulgarian *archegos* attacked the Roman army (AM 6301) and razed Serdica. Nikephoros led an expedition but "did not achieve anything worthy of mention." Nevertheless, he pretended he had conquered Krum and celebrated Easter in the court of his enemy. When the Roman soldiers discovered Nikephoros wanted them to retake Serdica they revolted "swearing that they could no longer suffer his boundless avarice and his scheming mind" (τὴν ἄμετρον φιλαργυρίαν καὶ κακομήχανον αὐτοῦ γνώμην). Nikephoros returned to Constantinople from where he identified the rebels. Promising clemency he ostensibly gathered them to receive their pay but instead, in language that echoes his previous punishments, seized the soldiers to "exact vengeance on most with beatings, with tonsures and with banishments."[31]

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28   MS 664 / dB 483.

29   τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς δαρμοῖς καὶ ἐξορίαις, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δημεύσεσι καθυπέβαλεν. MS 664 / dB 483.

30   ἐξεβλήθησαν τῆς μονῆς καὶ τῆς πόλεως ἐξορίᾳ παραπεμφθέντες. dB 484.26–27. The full passage states: "Theodore, abbot of Stoudios, and his brother Joseph, the archbishop of Thessalonica, along with the recluse Platon and their other monks withdrew from communion with Nikephoros, the most holy patriarch, on account of the *oikonomos* Joseph who had unlawfully married Constantine and Theodote. Seizing this opportunity, the emperor Nikephoros assembled many bishops and abbots and ordered that a synod be held against them. By this means they were expelled from their monastery and from the City and were banished in the month of January of the second indiction." MS 665 / dB 484.19–28.

31   A similar but distinct phrase (δαρμοῖς τε καὶ κουραῖς καὶ ἐξορίαις τοὺς πλείστους τιμωρησάμενος) from that used for the previous two revolts, confirming that this uprising is to be understood as occurring for different reasons than the previous. MS 666 / db 486.5–6.

3   The Ten Evils of Nikephoros I: An Overview

All of this leads to the entry for Nikephoros' eighth year (de Boor's AM 6302). The entry consists of only two passages: the much-discussed Ten "Evils," or "wicked deeds" (κακώσεις) of Nikephoros, and the odd and much less-discussed Parable of the *Keroullarios* (the Chandler).[32] The *Chronicle*'s description of a suite of fiscal policies as Ten Evils is, though hostile to Nikephoros, also the most comprehensive account we possess of his actions and reforms. Though my argument does not depend in any way on the relative significance of Nikephoros' actions for Byzantine history, at the present moment scholarship on the medieval Roman state and economy holds that Nikephoros' policies and reforms amounted to some of the most impactful changes made in the entire millennium of the byzantine period. For this reason it is necessary to say a brief word about this scholarly context before continuing my analysis of the rhetorical goals of the *Chronicle*'s account of the Ten Evils of Nikephoros I.

The fiscal and economic reforms enacted by Nikephoros and which are behind the so-called Ten Evils are essential for our current understanding of middle Byzantine fiscal structures—the relationship between the Roman military, economy, tax collection system, and bureaucratic apparatus—known to historians as the "Theme System" for its central organizing fiscal unit, the θέμα (*thema*, plural *themata*). Some decades ago it was thought that the theme system was a creation of the seventh and eighth centuries, and that by the ninth century this system was in a state of conflict with the imperial center at Constantinople.[33] The current consensus holds, instead, that "the so-called 'theme system' was actually a product of early ninth-century measures taken by Nikephoros I."[34] I provide in the paragraphs below the most essential features of how historians now understand the 'theme system' at the time of Nikephoros I. This should permit readers unfamiliar with this system to follow the discussion over the next several pages. Anyone unfamiliar with the middle Byzantine *themata* should begin with the recent comprehensive discussion in

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32   For reference, the reader can find the Ten Evils at MS 667–68 / dB 486–87 (AM 6302 [AD 809/10]) and the Parable of the Keroullarios at MS 668–69 / dB 487–88 (AM 6302 [AD 809/10]). It is important to note the rhetorical bluntness of the condemnation in the list of Ten Evils. The *Chronicle* simply labelled Nikephoros "evil" (κακία) who enacted "an evil" (κάκωσις): the deeds exemplify the character.

33   See Alexander P. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. "Theme" for an expanded description of the development of the theme system along these lines, and for bibliography supporting this point of view.

34   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 665.

J. Haldon and L. Brubaker's *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*, from which what follows is largely drawn.[35]

During the reign of Nikephoros "the word *thema* was applied to the establishment of a new type of military force in a designated area."[36] This was "a novel and effective way to recruit and maintain provincial armies and assign a direct fiscal burden for the equipping and maintenance of soldiers to the affected provinces."[37] From the perspective of the imperial palace, this new arrangement arose in the following way:

> [T]he state allocated the transferred soldiers to new lands—soldiers were being settled, as soldiers, with all the legal implications entailed in such a move. Soldiers also became for the first time a direct cost to the communities from which they were recruited or into which they were inserted, both in respect of paying for their basic equipment and in terms of covering their taxes. In doing this, Nikephoros was creating a new kind of army, less burdensome to the fisc, with a direct investment of its properties and communities.... This army was therefore allocated to a particular region within an existing military command, and 'placed' there, with the specific duty to protect imperial territory by protecting its own lands.[38]

Exactly who oversaw these changes or was employed to make the bureaucratic adjustments, exactly how and in what form were the local contributions to these soldiers levied, and many other questions remain fully up for debate.[39]

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35   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 715–17, and 746–55. For a slightly more recent summative discussion and bibliography see: Salvatore Cosentino, "La Perception de Domaine Économique Dans La Chronographie de Théophane," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 327–52; and, John F. Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740*, Carl Newell Jackson Lectures 13 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 258–75. For continued discussion of important points of contention: Federico Montinaro, "'Killing Empire': Goldilocks and the Three Byzantine Kommerkiarioi," *Journal of European Economic History* 46, no. 2 (2017): 165–72; Salvatore Cosentino, "The 'Empire That Would Not Die' Looks West," *Journal of European Economic History* 46, no. 2 (2017): 151–63.

36   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 749.

37   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 750.

38   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 748–49.

39   For important contributions to the discussion of both what constitutes this "system" and how it developed, see Paul Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century: The Sources and Problems* (Galway: Galway University

As F. Montinaro recently put it in a symposium on J. Haldon's new narrative in *The Empire that would not Die*, it remains entirely possible that we need to start afresh and allow for "pure invention rather than a mere act of survival," permitting of wholly new structures rather than only explaining change through slowly evolving old practices.[40]

Scholars readily admit that there is no Byzantine term for what we reconstruct as The Theme System, regardless of their position in the debates over how and to what degree Nikephoros administered the taxation, administration, and provision of the military through a new bureaucratic apparatus. Neither Nikephoros nor any other Byzantine would recognize such a term or concept. Since I am here interested in determining the meaning that the rhetorics of the Ten Evils conveyed to a contemporary audience and analyzing the significance of how that meaning was conveyed, I will only refer to the massive literature associated with the rise of the Theme System when this literature can help us understand what a specific Evil meant in practical terms.

What must be noted, however, is that the way the *Chronicle* presents these specific actions of Nikephoros, and the way we currently describe these actions—as a part of the so-called Theme System—are in direct contrast to each other. Byzantine historiography tends to narrate the administrative changes prior to and during Nikephoros' reign as the empire's successful response to the conquests of Arab tribes known as the expansion of Islam. For instance, in J. Haldon's recent study, these administrative changes are a leading character in defining the seventh to ninth-century Roman polity as *The Empire that Would Not Die*.[41] This is not to say that such an analysis is incorrect, but it is important to note that the *Chronicle* finds the very measures of Nikephoros which historians attribute with creating the Theme System to blame for the suffering of Christians under both the ʿAbbasids and the Romans. The steps Nikephoros I took to reify slowly evolving economic and bureaucratic practices

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Press, 1979), 27–67; Nicolas Oikonomidès, "Middle Byzantine Provincial Recruits: Salary and Armament," reprinted in *Social and Economic Life in Byzantium*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou, Variorum Collected Studies 799 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); John Haldon, "Military Service, Military Lands, and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993): 1–67. Then in Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 746 with n77 who observe that "there is no evidence for a direct association between military service and land during the seventh and eighth centuries"; also note the list of characteristics of a *thema* by the end of the reign of Nikephoros on pp. 752–53. Further in Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die*; and now Federico Montinaro, "'Killing Empire': Goldilocks and the Three Byzantine Kommerkiarioi," *Journal of European Economic History* 46, no. 2 (2017): 165–72.

40   Montinaro, "'Killing Empire': Goldilocks and the Three Byzantine Kommerkiarioi," 171.

41   Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die*.

and reorganizations into something that can be called a new fiscal system are found in the list of Ten Evils preserved in the *Chronicle*. Almost no attention has been paid to the fact that this list was created specifically in order to condemn these same administrative actions. The Ten Evils is a rhetorical set piece, and in addition to how historians have used it thus far it must *also* be discussed in the context of its function as the original impetus, the culmination of the entire *Chronographia* project.

As I will show, the rhetoric of the Ten Evils made a forced population transfer, a restructuring of church finance, reforms of inheritance law, taxation on the discovery of treasure, and other such measures into the height of evil in Roman history. For the *Chronicle* these measures were the proof that Nikephoros was the All-Devourer who "always acted for show and not for God,"[42] with love "for gold, and not for Christ,"[43] and whose policies were "godless punishments against the Christians."[44] Nikephoros' Ten Evils are portrayed as greater in significance than, for instance, Constantine v's supposed executions of those who insisted on the veneration of icons. The *Chronicle* made such hyperbolic accusations by introducing the evils with the claim that Nikephoros' measures caused citizens "in their folly, to utter blasphemies and pray to be invaded by the enemy."[45] According to this logic, Nikephoros' avaricious, impious actions impelled Christians to blaspheme God, and to will damnation both for themselves and for the Christian Roman Empire.

My analysis of the Ten Evils uses the literary setting of the *Chronicle* to recontextualize what we can deduce about the administrative reforms behind them. If this analysis contributes anything to the debate about the middle Byzantine 'theme system' and Nikephoros' role in creating it, that contribution will be to clarify the logic behind describing Nikephoros' reforming actions as so inherently evil. To begin this analysis, I turn first to the overall rhetorical framework for the passage as a whole.

When discussing the Ten Evils of Nikephoros historians have repeatedly noted the obvious association between the Ten Evils and the Ten Plagues which in the Book of Exodus God visited upon Egypt for Pharaoh's enslavement of the Hebrews.[46] The association is clear, but the metaphor is illogical

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42   MS 659 / dB 480.

43   MS 663 / dB 482. Compare the Gospel according to Matthew 6:24.

44   MS 667 / dB 486.

45   MS 667 / dB 486.

46   MS 669n3 with bibliography. For the classic discussion see: Franz Hermann Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie: von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (München: W. Fink, 1971), 74–78.

and needs explanation. First, the corresponding roles of God and Pharaoh do not hold up. In the Book of Exodus, Pharaoh did not create the Ten Plagues that were visited upon Egypt. Rather, God generated each plague to punish Pharaoh and his people and to demonstrate his power, shown by upsetting the balance between man and nature. In the *Chronicle* Nikephoros is attributed with agency: his role is parallel to that of the Divine in the story of the plagues. Second, it was the Egyptians who were punished by the plagues (and in the tenth plague, Pharaoh in particular) and not the Israelites, who in this parallel would presumably correspond to the Christian Romans. Third, in the drama of the Exodus story the Hebrews are saved, thereby demonstrating God's special favor upon them amongst all other peoples. There is no equivalent to the Israelites as the "Chosen Race" in the Ten Evils. Instead Nikephoros' evils bring about blasphemy against—in the sense of denial of—God. What meaning was associating the Ten Plagues of Egypt with the Ten Evils of Nikephoros meant to convey?

The parallel works when interpreted through the typological reasoning we have seen throughout the *Chronicle*. The goal of comparing Nikephoros to Pharaoh via comparing the Ten Evils to the Ten Plagues is to make Nikephoros into the fulfillment of the type of the over-proud ruler who would put himself in the place of God. In this way the metaphor serves to make Nikephoros into an antithesis or an antitype, carefully constructed to fulfill the ethical theme we have seen developing over the course of the *Chronicle*, of the equivocation of imperial greed with imperial impiety.[47]

Taken as a whole, the argument of the *Chronicle* is straightforward. The Ten Evils represent a wide range of policies, but the argument is conveyed through the two thematic groupings into which the ten are arranged. The first group of five evils constitutes evidence of "impiety" as hatred for the People of God, the Christians and the Church. Evils one, two, and three drive Christians to such extremes of distress that they blaspheme God. Evils four and five seize revenues from the Church by reclaiming dependent peasant renters (*paroikoi*) whom the previous emperors had placed under the church's supervision. The second group of five evils constitutes evidence of greed as the accumulation of capital for the emperor through the unjust seizure of wealth: Nikephoros shows "avarice" through actions taken against all his people, both rich and poor. The Ten Evils as a whole make Nikephoros the All-Devourer into the fulfillment of the impious emperor type. As such they show what imperial greed does to

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47   For previous discussions as Nikephoros as the New Pharaoh or in the language of the *Chronicle* the "Pharaoh of the Mind" see chapter 3 sections 3 and 5, and chapter 5 section 5.

a political community: the people are pillaged while relief for suffering—the mercy of the Church—is disenfranchised, inhibited, or removed.

The following discussion outlines the Ten Evils of Nikephoros' fiscal policies in the two thematic groups just identified. I briefly consider the meaning of each evil in light of scholars' explanations in social or economic terms, but I focus on the rhetorical framing, for our goal is to see how each evil connects to the imperial types which we have seen throughout the *Chronicle*.

4   The First Five Evils: The Evils of Impiety

My quotations of the Ten Evils in sections 4 and 5 of this chapter echo the presentation in the surviving manuscripts rather than that found in critical editions of the *Chronicle*. Specifically, this means that I have listed and numbered each vexation separately because in the ninth-century manuscripts where this passage survives (*Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155*), these numbers appear in the margins, written by hands that are almost certainly those of the original scribes.[48] Here are the first five:

1.   In this year Nikephoros, following the godless punishments [he had meted out] and intent on humiliating the army altogether, removed Christians from all the *themata* and ordered them to proceed to the Sklavinias after selling their estates. This state of affairs was no less grievous than captivity: many in their folly uttered blasphemies and prayed to be invaded by the enemy, others wept beside their ancestral tombs and extolled the happiness of the dead; some even hanged themselves to be delivered from such a sorry pass. Since their possessions were difficult to transport, they were in no position to take them along, and so witnessed the loss of properties acquired by parental toil. Everyone was in complete distress, the poor because of the above circumstances and those that will be recounted later on, while the richer sympathized with the poor (πτω-χοί, *ptochoi*) whom they were unable to help and awaited heavier misfortunes. These measures were started in the month of September and completed by holy Easter.[49]

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48   As the only substantive difference between the text in the ninth-century manuscripts and K. de Boor's edition is that, as noted, those manuscripts number each of the evils in the margin, besides those numbers the Greek for this and each of the Evils to follow is that of de Boor's critical edition. The translation is MS 667–68.

49   Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει Νικηφόρος μετὰ τὰς ἀθέους ὑπεξελεύσεις τὰ στρατεύματα πάντῃ ταπεινῶσαι σκεψάμενος Χριστιανοὺς ἀποικίσας ἐκ παντὸς θέματος ἐπὶ τὰς Σκλαυινίας γενέσθαι προσέτα-ξεν, τὰς δὲ τούτων ὑποστάσεις πιπράσκεσθαι. καὶ ἦν αἰχμαλωσίας οὐκ ἔλαττον τὸ πρᾶγμα, πολ-λῶν ἐξ ἀνοίας βλασφημούντων καὶ ἐχθρῶν ἐφόδους αἰτούντων, ἑτέρων δὲ περὶ τοὺς γονικοὺς

2. Secondly, he ordered a second evil, namely that poor people should be enrolled in the army and should be fitted out by the inhabitants of their commune, also paying to the Treasury 18 ½ *nomismata* per man plus his taxes in joint liability.[50]

3. His third evil idea was that everyone was to be assessed and everyone's taxes were to be raised, with an additional payment of 2 *keratia* per man for the paperwork.[51]

4. The fourth: he ordered that all remissions should be cancelled.[52]

5. The fifth: the *paroikoi* of charitable foundations (εὐαγεῖς οἶκοι, *euageis oikoi*), of the orphanage, of hostels, homes for the aged, churches, and imperial monasteries should be charged the hearth tax (καπνικόν, *kapnikon*) counting from the first year of his usurpation, and that their more important estates should be transferred to the imperial demesne (κουρατορία, *kouratoria*), whilst the rates due on them should be added to such estates and *paroikoi* as were left to the charitable foundations (εὐαγεῖς οἶκοι, *euageis oikoi*), with the result that many of them had their tax doubled whereas their dwellings and rural holdings were reduced.[53]

The theme of these first five evils is the impiety Nikephoros demonstrated by his not only failing to protect the poor, but directly exploiting them instead. The first three evils refer to tribulations faced by the poor (πτωχοί) among the Romans at large through population transfers to replenish underpopulated areas. The fourth and the fifth evils concern policies directed against the church's collection of rents from the poor who farmed its properties.

The First, Second, and Third Evils of Nikephoros seem to all have to do with aspects related to the resettlement of a population surplus from one area to an

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τάφους θρηνούντων καὶ τοὺς ἀποθανόντας μακαριζόντων· εἰσὶ δὲ οἳ καὶ ἀγχόναις ἐχρήσαντο πρὸς ἀπαλλαγὴν τῶν δεινῶν. τά τε γὰρ προσόντα δυσκίνητα συνεπιφέρεσθαι ἠδυνάτουν καὶ τὴν ἐκ γονικῶν πόνων κτηθεῖσαν ὕπαρξιν ὀλλυμένην ἑώρων· καὶ πᾶσα τοὺς πάντας εἶχεν ἀμηχανία, τῶν μὲν πενήτων ἐν τούτοις καὶ τοῖς ἑξῆς ῥηθησομένοις, τῶν δὲ ὑπερεχόντων συμπασχόντων αὐτοῖς καὶ μὴ δυναμένων βοηθῆσαι ἀπεκδεχομένων τε βαρυτέρας συμφοράς. ταῦτα ἤρχθη μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου μηνός, πρὸς δὲ τὸ ἅγιον πάσχα πεπέρασται. dB 486.10–23.

50   δευτέραν σὺν ταύτῃ κάκωσιν, προσέταξε στρατεύεσθαι πτωχοὺς καὶ ἐξοπλίζεσθαι παρὰ τῶν ὁμοχώρων, παρέχοντας καὶ ἀνὰ ὀκτωκαίδεκα ἡμίσους νομισμάτων τῷ δημοσίῳ, καὶ ἀλληλεγγύως τὰ δημόσια. dB 486.23–26.

51   τρίτην κακόνοιαν, ἐποπτεύεσθαι πάντας, καὶ ἀναβιβάζεσθαι τὰ τούτων τέλη, παρέχοντας καὶ χαρτιατικῶν ἕνεκα ἀνὰ κερατίων β′. dB 486.26–28.

52   καὶ πρὸς τετάρτην, τοὺς κουφισμοὺς πάντας ἀναβιβάζεσθαι προσέταττεν. dB 486.28–29.

53   πέμπτην, τοὺς τῶν εὐαγῶν οἴκων παροίκους τοῦ τε ὀρφανοτροφείου καὶ τῶν ξενώνων καὶ γηροκομείων τε καὶ ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ μοναστηρίων βασιλικῶν τὰ καπνικὰ ἀπαιτεῖσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἔτους τῆς αὐτοῦ τυραννίδος, τὰ δὲ κρείττονα τῶν κτημάτων εἰς τὴν βασιλικὴν κουρατορίαν αἴρεσθαι, τὰ μέντοι τέλη αὐτῶν ἐπιτίθεσθαι τοῖς ἐναπομείνασιν εἰς τοὺς αὐτοὺς εὐαγεῖς οἴκους κτήμασι καὶ παροίκοις, ὡς διπλοῦσθαι πολλῶν τὰ τέλη, τῶν οἰκήσεων στενουμένων αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν χωρίων. dB 486.29–487.5.

area in need of capable farmers both for security, and to fully exploit the land in question. The First Evil explicitly describes a population transfer in which a great number of "the poor" (πτωχοί) were moved from territories in Asia Minor to those known as *Sklavinia* in Macedonia, the Peloponnesos, and possibly Thrace.[54] Nikephoros repopulated these newly reconquered areas with fully hellenized, sedentary farmers from the Byzantine heartland of Asia Minor who fell into the economic category of "the poor." The Second Evil was then the enrolling of these "poor citizens … in the army." It would make sense to a contemporary reader for these conscripted farmers to be connected to the army because "the poor" is a technical fiscal category meaning an individual who was not able to pay the 18 ½ *nomismata* necessary for equipping a soldier.[55] Many farmers would not have met this bar and so in the case that individuals still could not pay the 18 ½ *nomismata*, the community, or neighborhood—which the Second Evil calls the ὁμοχώροι—would collectively pay those military dues.[56] The Second Evil must mean that upon migration, the land given to "poor" in question would have been immediately linked to the support of the local military district, the *thema*. Nikephoros' measures moved these small-scale farmers to make them productive for the military. Upon being moved, the farmers were immediately incorporated into the (perhaps more effective) tax structures in those *themata*, sending the revenues from their taxation directly into the supply of the local military units. Many of these newly conscripted farmers may even have previously been exempt from taxation due to their

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54   Omeljan Pritsak, *ODB* s.v. "Sklavinia." The *Sklavinia* (Σκλαυινία) was a name for the region given to the people group, the *Sklavinoi* (Σκλαυινοί), from North of the Danube that was forcefully emigrated into the Balkans over the course of the sixth and seventh centuries. The term was, and is, sometimes used indiscriminately with "Avars." According to O. Pritsak the plural term *sklaviniai* (σκλαυινίαι) in the ninth century could still mean "a stronghold … of the frontier military type", or "a military colony [that] subsisted by agriculture." It is not exactly clear how contemporaries would have read the frequent use of the term in the *Chronicle*. For disambiguation and discussion of the appearance of the term see Florin Curta, "*Sklaviniai* and ethnic adjectives: a clarification," *Byzantion Nea Hellás* 30 (2011): 85–98.

55   The 18 ½ *nomismata* assessment represents the cost of a soldier which C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 669n4) understand as one of two different payments, for the fitting out of the soldier and for his taxes. Joint liability was a principle laid down in the eighth-century Rural Code (or Farmer's Law) in which the entire village of a soldier was responsible for his taxes while he was away on campaign. Lemerle, *Agrarian History of Byzantium*, 27–67, especially 62–63; Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 747–48.

56   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 747–48.

relative poverty.[57] This is the sense in which all of these "poor" were, technically speaking, "enrolled in the army."

The Third Evil seems to go back in time to point out that Nikephoros funded a census by assessing each taxpayer an additional two *keratia* (1/12 *nomismata*).[58] Historians think this census took place over the course of 807–809. If correct, it is worth noting that those are the very years in which administrators, patriarchal officials, and soldiers attempted the revolt against Nikephoros which the *Chronicle* described in such favorable terms. Regardless, the point of the description in the *Chronicle* is that Nikephoros made the population pay for the tax registers to be updated over the course of 807–809, which generated the data to facilitate the population transfers of 810. Thus, "the poor" funded their own redistribution, Nikephoros made them pay for their own exploitation.

It is not clear what, exactly, stands behind the Fourth Evil. C. Mango believed the Fourth Evil's generic statement that tax exemptions ("remissions") were revoked should be interpreted on the basis of the Fifth Evil's description (as below) of Nikephoros' reorganization of the monastic, ecclesiastical, and charitable properties of Constantinople, and thus as repeals of Irene's grant of tax relief to Constantinopolitan monastic institutions.[59] It could also be read in terms of the just-discussed actions to make "the poor" directly fund the military, making the Fourth Evil, in effect, simply a restatement of the wickedness of the Second and Third Evil. In the end, there is simply too little here to make out the content of the actual economic measures.[60]

Our contextualized analysis can help with this puzzle. If the Fourth Evil is read in light of the *Chronicle*'s contrast between the generosity of Irene's reign and the "All-Devouring" Nikephoros, we can recall Irene's grants of tax relief to urban monasteries and two other specific exemptions: in March 801 Irene revoked the urban taxes on Constantinople as a whole, as well as the taxes on imports in the *kommerkia* trade centers.[61] Even if this is not the case

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57   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 753–55.

58   This new census perhaps took as long as two years to complete, and almost certainly took place in anticipation of the population transfer described as the First Evil and the Second Evil. Warren T. Treadgold, "The Revival of Byzantine Learning and the Revival of the Byzantine State," *American Historical Review* 84, no. 5 (1979): 1259–60, 1262.

59   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 669n7.

60   Paul Speck, *Kaiser Leon III., die Geschichtswerke des Nikephoros und des Theophanes und der Liber Pontificalis*, Poikila Byzantina 19 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 2002), 806–9.

61   Irene's exemptions on the *kommerkia* were described earlier in the *Chronicle* at MS 653 / dB 475 (AM 6293) with MS 669 n7. The "private" church—the network of especially suburban monasteries—was strongly favored, patronized, and protected by Irene through policies which may even have been originally crafted with the help of George the Synkellos.

historically, within the literary world constructed by the *Chronicle* this is the most coherent reading: that the Fourth Evil refers to Nikephoros revoking the exemptions granted by Irene. The Fourth Evil is thus a claim that Nikephoros revoked policies defining Irene's generosity or liberality, the hallmarks of the good emperor type.

The Fifth Evil relates to Nikephoros' reforms of church finances and property management, specifically properties designated for the charitable institutions of Constantinople. M. Kaplan's work to understand this measure has remained unchallenged.[62] While the measure has also not been as fervently debated as other measures, these policies were essential for Nikephoros' wider fiscal and political strategies. More importantly for our purposes, this is the measure most directly related to the interests of the work's authors and the faction behind the 807–809 revolt as it has to do with the fiscal divisions between the patriarchal and imperial administrations.

The Fifth Evil demonstrates Nikephoros' impiety in three ways. First, he shifted the administration of certain lands from the ecclesia to the imperium; second, he reapportioned those farms; and third, he assessed their dependent renters back taxes from taxes which they had previously been exempt. The explanation, drawing largely on M. Kaplan's work, is as follows. The *euageis*

On the complex debate concerning the changing meaning and role of this term and the entities to which it refers see (with further bibliography): Montinaro, "'Killing Empire': Goldilocks and the Three Byzantine Kommerkiarioi."

62   Aikaterina Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, trans. Timothy Cullen, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1993), 204–205; Nicolas Oikonomidès, "De l'impôt de distribution à l'impôt de quotité à propos du premier cadastre byzantin (7ᵉ–9ᵉ siècle)," in *Social and Economic Life in Byzantium*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou, Variorum Collected Studies 799 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 16–17. Lemerle, *Agrarian History of Byzantium*, 55–56; 177–88. Jacques LeFort, "The Rural Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou, 3 vols., DOS 39 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 1: 286–87. Nicolas Oikonomidès, "The Role of the Byzantine State in the Economy," in Laiou, *Economic History of Byzantium*, 3:1007. Michel Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIᵉ au XIᵉ siècle: propriété et exploitation du sol* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1992), 266–68. Michel Kaplan, "Maisons impériales et fondations pieuses: Réorganisation de la fortune impériale et assistance publique de la fin du VIIIᵉ siècle à la fin du Xᵉ siècle," in *Byzance: Villes et campagnes*, Les médiévistes français 7 (Paris: Picard, 2006), 167–83, especially 169–72 (originally published *Byzantion* 61 [1991]). Before Kaplan's arguments, Byzantinists had indeed already identified the ninth-century administrative switch from operating Constantinople's charitable institutions out of the patriarch, to operating them out of the imperial administration. Nevertheless, the field discussed this development as a gradual occurrence. Kaplan insisted that the change in fact happened essentially all at once, through the administrative reforms of Nikephoros I that lie behind the Fifth Evil.

oikoi (εὐαγεῖς οἶκοι) in this evil were the charitable houses which provided the needy of Constantinople with basic welfare by being directly supplied by specific farms. Though those farms were a part of the imperial *domain* (the explicit property of the emperor), they had been designated to be overseen by the church for the purpose of distributing the rents and produce to the relevant charitable houses. Nikephoros intervened and reformed the management of these properties by removing them from the church's supervision and placing them under one of the emperor's own bureaucratic departments, thus directly limiting the power and influence of the church.[63]

Next, Nikephoros reorganized the farms themselves. Kaplan speculates that Nikephoros took the best land from these *euageis oikoi*-designated farms for the imperial *demesne* (*kouratoria*, the estates directly exploited by the emperor).[64] The remaining lands—reduced in size and less productive—

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63   Kaplan's treatment of the fifth vexation pays careful attention to the language of the passage. The use of the term εὐαγεῖς οἶκοι ("charitable establishments") in the passage likely alerts us to specific categories of imperial administration. When the *Chronographia* used the adjective "imperial" (βασιλικός) to describe the first several institutions listed, the adjective was used attributively to qualify *each* of the establishments cited: the *imperial* orphanage, the *imperial* hostels, the *imperial* homes for the elderly, and the *imperial* monasteries. Michel Kaplan, "Maisons impériales et fondations pieuses," 168n5. See also: Michel Kaplan, "Quelques aspects des maisons divines du VIᵉ au IXᵉ siècle," in *Byzance: Villes et campagnes*, 138–56, 160 (originally published in *Mélanges Svoronos* [Rethymno, 1986]). The use of the singular in "the orphanage" likely indicates the most important orphanage in the capital, of St. Paul in the Acropolis region founded by Justin II. Raymond Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, part 1, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriacat oecuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1969), 567–68. Alice-Mary Talbot and Alexander P. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. "Orphanages."

64   Kaplan believed that Nikephoros was acting practically: imperial revenues had become insufficient for imperial needs. The lands newly categorized as part of the "the imperial *kouratoria*" (κουρατορία) would have been directly exploited imperial estates overseen by the *kourator* (κουράτωρ). The number of officials under the treasury department increased around this time, possibly to accommodate the confiscations added to the imperial demense. Though he remained low in rank, this would have given the *koutaror*, the official overseeing the imperial *kouratoria*, some power. Note the *kourator* under the *sakellarios* at Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXᵉ et Xᵉ siècles: Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire*, Le monde byzantin (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1972), 107.17, but with his own subordinates at 123.11–27. See: Kaplan, "Quelques aspects des maisons divines," 147, 153, 168–69; Kaplan, "Maisons impériales et fondations pieuses," 168–69, 179; Alexander P. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. "Kouratoreia"; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines*, 318. In the tenth century, the *kouratoria* would be more fully absorbed into department of the treasury, overseen by the *logothetes tou genikou*, Nikephoros' former position. MS 655 / dB 476 (AM 6295). Anecdotal evidence inclines in this direction, for this office would have had an unusual

were re-organized to be farmed by the original *paroikoi* for the supply of the *euageis oikoi* charitable houses at the same level as before. Finally, these farms had received an exemption from the *kapnikon* (a hearth tax) granted to lands owned by the church.[65] Nikephoros revoked the tax exemption and required the farmers to pay in arrears from the beginning of his reign. That is, the *kapnikon* was assessed retroactively from November 802. In sum, the emperor took responsibility for the charitable houses of Constantinople completely away from the patriarchate, reappropriated much of the territory designated for their provision, and extracted an increased total tax from that territory, now divided into smaller properties, all while demanding the same level of provision for the charitable houses.

It is possible that Nikephoros was simply returning to the way things had been a few decades before, for since the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, religious institutions in Constantinople had achieved increasing independence and therefore wealth and power.[66] And, as M. Kaplan concludes, the reform of the management of lands designated for the charitable institutions of Constantinople in the Fifth Evil produced an immediate and lasting surplus for the Treasury.[67] Nevertheless, for the second decade of the ninth century this was a landmark shift in the relationship between the populace, the patriarchate, and the palace: the power and influence of the church would have been

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amount of power and influence if it oversaw a handful of imperial estates. Also note that this department produced two successors, Leo V the Armenian and Michael Rhangabe, understandable if these estates represented large tracts of directly exploited imperial land. Kaplan, "Maisons impériales et fondations pieuses," 172–73.

65   Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 201–9. On *kapnikon* see: Mark C. Bartusis, *ODB* s.v. "Kapnikon."

66   John Prescott Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire*, DOS 24 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1987), 117–19; 128–29; Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 312–52, especially 330–43. The Constantinopolitan religious houses had long resisted centralization; by comparison Justinian had centralized the imperial domains in Cappadocia all the way back in the sixth century. On the relevant canons of the council of Nicaea II in 787 see: Kaplan, "Quelques aspects des maisons divines," 147–48; Michel Kaplan, "Les moines et leurs biens fonciers à Byzance du VIIIᵉ au Xᵉ siècle: Acquisition, conservation et mise en valeur," in *Byzance: Villes et campagnes*, 218–20 (originally published *Revue bénédictine* 103 [1993]); and, Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 318–19 and 343–47.

67   Nikephoros may well have created a new office to oversee these new revenues: the appearance of grand *kourator* (μέγας κουράτωρ) at the beginning of the ninth century (790–830) tellingly coincides with the return of the *euageis oikoi* to the control of the state, the formation of new imperial monasteries, and the imperial takeover of ancient foundations. Kaplan, "Maisons impériales et fondations pieuses," 178–79.

drastically reduced by removing significant tracts of land from its supervision and placing them under the emperor's own bureaucratic departments.

From the point of view of the *Chronicle*, Nikephoros' crime was predicated on what these changes said about ecclesiology: the role of the Church in the world. The reclamation of charitable revenues for the *imperium* seemed to mean that the church was in effect part of the imperial domain, directly subject to the needs and demands of the ruler.[68] The Fifth Evil accused the imperium of enriching itself on lands previously designated to feed the poor, sick, orphaned, and elderly. And, to be specific, the majority of officials noted under the 808 rebellion would have had much less to supervise: one would presume it led to a reduction in their departments. This was how the *Chronicle* could assert that Nikephoros' administrative reorganization was fundamentally impious and an attack on Christians.

In conclusion to my discussion of the first five evils, it is worth recalling that the leader of the 808 revolt, Arsaber, served as the *quaestor*. There is a direct connection between the supervisory duties of the ninth-century *quaestor* and the First Evil, the measures behind which would have brought mass migration through Constantinople. The *quaestor* was traditionally charged with supervision of travellers and visiting provincials, specifically granted the authority to enact punishments for injustices committed against tenants by their landlords. This would not only concern complaints from the newly settled poor, but also the *paroikoi* of the *euageis oikoi* of the Fifth Evil, who may have desired to file complaints against the fisc for their forced dispossession and resettlement.[69] In years past the *quaestor* would have been responsible for adjudicating related disputes, but in setting up his "evil and unjust tribunal at the Magnaura," Nikephoros had taken over the *quaestor*'s ability to take up such complaints.[70] In other words, those who might bring legal complaints against Nikephoros' measures would have to do so before Nikephoros himself: there was no one left who could bring Nikephoros to justice.

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68   For instance, even the way the Orphanage of Constantinople was run mattered, and was an issue of direct concern to the Emperor of the Romans. Lands that were part of the imperial domain remained ultimately subject to the desires of the emperor. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 111–30.

69   J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century; with a Revised Text of the Kletorologion of Philotheos* (New York: B. Franklin, 1958), 74; Rodolphe Guilland, "Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire Byzantin. Le questeur: ὁ κοιαίστωρ, quaestor," *Byzantion* 41 (1971): 81–82.

70   MS 657 / dB 478.

5   The Last Five Evils: The Evils of Greed

The first five evils made the case for Nikephoros' impiety. This next set of five
evils make the accusation of imperial avarice. They attribute Nikephoros with
a program of unjust seizure of monetary resources from the population he was
charged with protecting.

6.   Sixth [evil]: the *strategoi* should keep an eye on all who recovered quickly
     from poverty and exact money from them as if they had found treasure
     trove.[71]

7.   Seventh (evil): everyone who in the previous twenty years had discovered
     any kind of jar or vessel should likewise be deprived of their money.[72]

8.   Eighth [evil]: the poor (*ptochoi*) who had received a divided inheritance
     from their fathers and grandfathers should be taxed by the Treasury for
     the same period of twenty years; and, that those who had bought house-
     hold slaves outside Abydos and especially in the Dodekanese should pay
     an impost of 2 *nomismata* per head.[73]

9.   Ninth [evil]: the *naukleroi* who lived on the sea coast, especially that of
     Asia Minor, and who had never practised agriculture should be forced
     to buy some of the estates [Nikephoros] had seized with a view to being
     assigned an assessment by him.[74]

10. Tenth [evil]: convening the foremost *naukleroi* of Constantinople, he
     gave each a loan of 12 lbs. of gold at a rate of interest of 4 *keratia* to the
     nomismata on top of the usual custom dues which they were liable.[75]

Evils Six, Seven, and the first part of Eight claimed Nikephoros demonstrated
avarice by seizing wealth from the specifically "poor" portions of the popula-
tion. That is, the Chronographia grouped new laws about inheritances (Eighth
Evil), treasure troves (Seventh Evil), and "sudden changes in wealth" (Sixth
Evil) as all contributing to the subjugation of the "poor" population (to be read

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71   Translation MS 668. ἕκτην, σκοπεῖσθαι παρὰ τῶν στρατηγούντων τοὺς ἀθρόως ἐκ πτωχείας
     ἀνακτησαμένους, καὶ ἀπαιτεῖσθαι χρήματα ὡς εὑρετὰς θησαυρῶν. dB 487.6–8.

72   ἑβδόμην, τοὺς πρὸ κ΄ χρόνων εὑρηκότας καὶ μέχρι τῆς δεῦρο πίθον ἢ σκεῦος ὁτιοῦν καὶ αὐτοὺς
     ἐξαργυρίζεσθαι. dB 487.8–9.

73   ὀγδόην, τοὺς ἐκ πάππων ἢ πατέρων κληρονομήσαντας διαιρεθέντας, ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν χρόνων κ΄ ἐξα-
     ναδιδόναι τῷ δημοσίῳ, τοὺς πένητας· καὶ τοὺς ὠνησαμένους ἔξω τῆς Ἀβύδου σώματα οἰκετικά,
     ἀνὰ β΄ νομισμάτων τελέσαι προσέταξεν, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Δωδεκάνησον. dB 487.9–13.

74   ἐννάτην, τοὺς τὰς παραθαλασσίας οἰκοῦντας, μάλιστα τῆς μικρᾶς Ἀσίας, ναυκλήρους μηδέποτε
     γηπονικῶς ζήσαντας ἄκοντας ὠνεῖσθαι ἐκ τῶν καθαρπαγέντων αὐτῷ κτημάτων, ὡς ἂν ἐκτιμη-
     θῶσι παρ' αὐτῷ. dB 487.13–16.

75   δεκάτην, τοὺς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἐπισήμους ναυκλήρους συναγαγὼν δέδωκεν ἐπὶ τόκῳ
     τετρακεράτῳ τὸ νόμισμα ἀνὰ χρυσίου λιτρῶν δώδεκα τελοῦντας καὶ τὰ συνήθη κωμέρκια.
     dB 487.17–19.

in line with the fiscal meaning of the "poor," as above).[76] In the second part of the Eighth Evil as well as Nine and Ten, Nikephoros is shown as avaricious by seizing the wealth of "rich" segments of the population. The combination of the two implied that Nikephoros' avarice was inflicted upon the entirety of society, rich and poor alike. In sum, the effect was to make the state the direct beneficiary of any significant economic growth accumulated by single individuals, regardless of their status as one of the "poor" or as one of the "powerful". As we will discuss below, it should now be clear why the *Chronographia* made this series of evils the heart of the accusation that Nikephoros was the epitome of imperial avarice.[77]

The Sixth Evil in particular re-defined the sudden acquisition of any wealth as the discovery of treasure. This measure seems to have created a category of revenue previously outside the purview of the state, for by defining sudden revenues as "treasure," Nikephoros made them liable to taxation. *All* rapid increases in wealth—we might imagine a range of events—were to be monitored by the *strategos* of the local *thema* and seized by the state as treasure. The Seventh Evil—seizing a discovered jar or vessel—similarly claims discovered treasure troves such as coin hoards (which would be stored in jars) on behalf of the imperial fisc. We can even identify the specific older law which this new measure would have overturned: the so-called "treasure trove law" of Justinian I which had protected finders of "treasure" from taxation.[78] The *Chronicle* emphasizes Nikephoros' rapaciousness did not simply overturn Justinian's decree to exempt these discoveries from taxes but subjected the entire amount of any discovery from the previous twenty years to immediate seizure by the imperial fisc. Nikephoros thus changed the empire's understanding of "treasure" from something liable to either taxation or exemption to a good that was in fact entirely the property of the fisc. The first part of the Eighth Evil builds directly on this critique, accusing Nikephoros of collecting back-taxes on inheritances received by "the poor" at any time in the twenty years prior to the edict.[79] According to A. Christophilopoulou, "the poor" in

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76 It is not clear whether the finds were limited to "random" discoveries—in a field, or an abandoned building—or whether subjects would now be taxed for "discovering treasure" when in fact that treasure was one's own buried savings horde: this is the very sort of ambiguity the *Chronicle* used to shape Nikephoros' diverse actions into a systematic program with a specific moral agenda.

77 For another summary see: Oikonomidès, "Role of the Byzantine State," 3:990.

78 Ernest Metzger, *A Companion to Justinian's Institutes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 60.

79 This date of twenty years is presumably simply a round number and was not chosen in order to overturn a measure from AM 6280–6282 (AD 787–790).

this measure refer to the specific fiscal category of those who receive an inheritance of fifty *nomismata* or less, a "poor man's inheritance."[80] The result for the state would be the potential to suddenly seize a sizeable amount of coin, an undisclosed percentage of all inheritances up to 50 gold coins received over the previous twenty years.

Interpretation of the second half of the eighth, and the ninth and tenth evils is fairly complex if the goal is to exactly understand their impact as administrative measures. This is not, however, our present goal and if approached as a group it is possible to make sense of these claims as a piece of policy critique. The second half of the eighth vexation concerns increased taxation on the import of slaves: the import hub of Abydos—at the mouth of the Hellespont— retained control of the slave trade coming into Constantinople from the South by preventing the establishment of rival centers for human imports on the islands off the coast of Asia Minor, such as Rhodes.[81] The tax of two *nomismata* per head seems to be the reinforcement of an existing tax, rather than the imposition of a new, higher tax.[82]

The Ninth Evil refers to "some of the estates" which "Nikephoros had seized" clearly indicating that Nikephoros' administration was making every effort to re-sell newly seized lands at value (a cash windfall). Nevertheless, the fact that the text does not explicitly state the referent—which estates had Nikephoros seized?—has led to much debate. Some scholars have understood this to refer to the seizures noted in the First Evil—in which Nikephoros had "removed Christians from all the *themata* and ordered them to proceed to the Sklavinias *after selling their estates*," specifically reading it in light of the proposed development of the Theme System already mentioned. If this is correct, the action behind this Ninth Evil could be that Nikephoros acquired some of those same

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80   Until this action by Nikephoros, there does not seem to have been any tax on inheritance in cases where the assets of the deceased were shared out between two or more persons and the share *each* received amounted to no more than 50 *nomismata*. One important result of the measure would have been to erode part of the legal distinction between "rich" and "poor." The poor would now pay the same inheritance tax as the rich. Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 204.

81   Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

82   Given that the measure specifically names the region where rival slave-trading centers had already been established (in the Dodacanese), we can presume that non-regulated slave markets were thriving, and that this was an attempt to regain regulatory control. See discussion of this passage and its relationship to the North-South axis of trade to and from Constantinople in Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, c.700–c.900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 587–91.

estates (seized in the First Evil) and sold them to "*naukleroi* who lived upon the sea coast."[83] Though the reality behind this measure is not settled, I am inclined to agree with P. Lemerle, C. Mango, and J. Haldon who interpret *naukleroi* to literally mean "shipowners" rather than as a new technical term meaning "sailors in the navy attached to military estates."[84] It seems more believable that shipowners, rather than mere naval recruits, were imagined to have had access to the cash necessary for the land purchases which Nikephoros was demanding.[85]

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83   While *naukleroi* usually designates shipowners, G. Ostrogorsky and A. Christophilopoulou argued that the estates referred to specifically "military lands" (*stratiotai ktemata*), in which case the *naukleroi* would be specifically sailors in the imperial navy. According to G. Ostrogorsky (and later A. Christophilipoulou), the Ninth Evil extended the already extant Theme System for funding an inland military cohort to outfitting the navy. If this was so, then Nikephoros would have been making each sailor's community collectively obligated to care for their sailor's land, to provide for his supplies, and to pay his taxes. Georg Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, Rutgers Byzantine Series (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 190–91. Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 205–6.

84   L. Brubaker and J. Haldon (*Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 750–751) assert that landholdings were not specifically designated as military lands until the tenth century. In this they agree with the older discussion in Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium*, 68–69 and with Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 670n16. For a broader and general discussion see: Lemerle, *Agrarian History of Byzantium*, 68–192; and especially 71–73. A. Christophilopoulou responded to the arguments of J. Haldon et al., objecting that the *naukleroi* were already "a tiny elite of the seafaring community," and that putting even more lands in their hands amounted to imperial encouragement of estate-sized landholdings, which is contrary to our understanding of imperial concern in the Middle Byzantine Period to favor the "poor" against the predations of the "powerful." In A. Christophilopoulou's favor, it could be said that P. Lemerle, C. Mango, and J. Haldon's interpretation does seem somewhat contrary to the trajectory of Nikephoros' economic reforms: Nikephoros did seem interested in strengthening the armed forces by limiting the possibilities for large landowners and limiting large estates. Nevertheless, our evidence for the *imperium*'s concern to suppress the powerful in favor of the poor comes primarily from nearly a century and more after the events under discussion here, from the period of the Macedonian dynasty.

85   If the *naukleroi* of the Ninth Evil *does* relate to the development of the Theme System, and the *naukleroi* are to become farmer-sailor-soldiers, it is hard to see how the expansion of the Theme System relates specifically to the imperial vice of avarice. An interpretation by F. Uspenskij, still largely passed over, sought to strike something of a middle ground accounting for important insights from both sides: "the seafaring inhabitants of the coastlands, particularly in Asia Minor, who have never made their livelihood by farming, were obliged to cultivate the confiscated lands they bought *and also* to serve in the imperial navy, mostly in the units raised from the maritime themes." That is, like C. Mango and J. Haldon, F. Uspenskij also understood the *naukleroi* to be middling to upper-class shipowners, but with A. Christophilopoulou believed that the forced purchase of land

Regardless, the significant point for our purposes is the moral context in which a reader is prompted to understand these actions. Reading the Ninth Evil in the context of the Eighth Evil that came just before makes it clear that the rhetorical point is not whether the *naukleroi* of the Ninth Evil designated naval sailor-farmers or the wealthy commercial class of shipowners along the coast of Asia Minor. The significance was Nikephoros extracting wealth for the imperial fisc from those who possessed surplus. Regardless of who purchased the lands, the imperial administration received a great deal of capital from dictating the forced purchase of estates which it had seized, and thereby also ensured continued tax revenues from those same estates.

The *naukleroi* are also the subject of the Tenth Evil and as C. Mango points out, the *naukleroi* here can *only* be understood in the literal sense of "the foremost shipowners of Constantinople."[86] The *naukleroi* of Constantinople were made to take on loans of twelve talents (or pounds) of gold from the imperial treasury.[87] This seems to be a one-time mass disbursement of imperial capital in high-interest loans. The *Chronographia* states that Nikephoros fixed the interest at 4 *keratia* to the *nomismata*, that is, 16.7%,[88] which figure A. Laiou took to indicate that the measure was extortionate.[89] Nikephoros'

conscripted seafaring individuals who previously enjoyed freedom of economic activity into the *thema* system of military small holdings. As cited in Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 205–6.

86   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 670n16.

87   The Tenth Evil has been primarily discussed in the context of a "Byzantine perspective" on interest and usury interpreted to mean Nikephoros attempted to do away with private lending. See the discussion on lending in Angeliki E. Laiou, "Economic Thought and Ideology," in Laiou, *Economic History of Byzantium*, 1123–44, especially 1130–33 and 1136–39. The argument is: if *naukleroi* desired to conduct a trading venture of any kind through borrowed capital, they would only be able to take out these loans from the imperial treasury. This would make the state the only legal lender.

88   C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 670n17) note that the next historical notice we have concerning the relationship of the Byzantine state to speculative lending was Leo VI's tenth-century *Novella* 83 which fixed the acceptable loan rate at 4.17% with any party able to serve as the lender. The interest rate is higher than the maximum under Justinian I (12%), but it may have already been the norm by the late eighth or early ninth century. A rate of 16.7% was the unofficially recognized maximum for a loan in the twelfth century and may have been standard by as early as the 790s.

89   This action would amount to dispersing a large amount of capital to individuals who had been carefully selected based on the state's ability to hold them accountable for the use of that capital. When the individuals, the wealthiest *naukleroi,* returned that capital in a matter of years, the fisc would make a tidy 16.7% profit on its "investment" in maritime trade in and around Constantinople. Angeliki E. Laiou, "Exchange and Trade: Seventh—Twelfth Centuries," in Laiou, *Economic History of Byzantium*, 2:711–713. And: Angeliki E. Laiou, "God and Mammon: Credit, Trade, Profit and the Canonists," in *Economic Thought and*

actual goals are out of the historian's reach.[90] What we can say is that the *Chronicle*'s Tenth Evil accused Nikephoros of snatching up revenues from trade.[91] In the context of the work's rhetorical goals this fulfills the point of the latter five evils' accusations: in his innate avarice Nikephoros unjustly seized monetary resources from all across the population he was charged with protecting.[92] Assuming that these measures were successfully carried out, they paved the way for the imperial fisc to quickly obtain a significant amount of revenue and specifically, given the nature of the items discussed, of revenue in cash.

      Economic Life in Byzantium, ed. Cécile Morrisson and Rowan Dorin, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS1033 (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2013). This builds on earlier analyses by Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 206–7.

90   Though from the emperor's point of view, it seems to have forced significant maritime trade ventures by injecting capital with which wealthy merchants had to either make a significant profit or take the financial loss of the interest. W. Treadgold ("Revival of Byzantine Learning," 165–66) suggested that the loans would have stimulated the economy. More immediately, a question that has yet to be raised in scholarly discussions is: how could Nikephoros afford to dispense with so much capital from the imperial treasury when—as we learn from the next entry AM 6303 (AD 811)—Nikephoros was planning a major military campaign? The sum of these five measures could be the answer. If Nikephoros seized property from the population in Asia Minor, then forced the *naukleroi* on the coast of Asia Minor to buy up those estates, this would have provided the emperor with a great deal of capital. Rather than simply holding onto that sudden injection of capital, Nikephoros immediately sought to turn an even greater profit by forcing the *naukleroi* of Constantinople to take on that capital as loans, to be returned in a few years with interest. In other words, Nikephoros managed to seize the surplus capital from one portion of the population, and then require another portion of the population to increase that capital by 16.7%. If we imagine Nikephoros' rationale in enacting these five (or rather six) measures—as I have just proposed we delineate them—and if we take the upcoming campaign against the Bulgarians into consideration, Nikephoros was guaranteeing that, whatever happened on the campaign, when he returned he would be able to expect the receipt of a massive amount of capital into the imperial treasury with which he might settle his campaign debts.

91   Laiou, "Exchange and Trade," 2:711: "At the same time, the emperor seems to have forbidden interest-bearing sea-loans made by individuals. In this measure, one may see an effort to increase state control of Constantinopolitan maritime trade as well as of the revenues thereof." On control through increased taxation see Oikonomidès, "Role of the Byzantine State," 3:986–87.

92   A. Christophilopoulou's sustained work on the reforms of Nikephoros—summarized in her *Byzantine History II: 610–867*—makes the astute connection between the "Evils" listed at the end of George's list, and those at the beginning. In other words, the forced purchase of estates which we have just been discussing, likely relates directly to the population transfers described in the first three "Evils." Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, 201–9.

The *Chronicle* was composed to make this set piece provide the content for the polemic against Nikephoros I, and to set up the conclusion of the entire project. It is therefore essential to establish how to understand these Ten Evils as a whole, specifically as a parallel to the type of the Ten Plagues used to punish the Egyptians in the *Book of Exodus*. It is impossible to read the Ten Evils' imperial edicts and orders as a direct simile for God's generation of Ten Plagues.[93] There is no indication the *Chronicle* wanted readers to think that Nikephoros ruled over the Egyptians. Instead, the *Chronicle* stated that Nikephoros' actions caused "the Christians" to lose their faith, to blaspheme against God, and to call out for self-destruction. If anything, Nikephoros' reign (through the Ten Evils) was turning the Chosen People (the Christians) into the Egyptians. Nikephoros' Ten Evils played out the story of the Ten Plagues in reverse.

Rather than a direct simile, the Ten Evils constitute a typological inversion, an over-writing of the Exodus story as the Ten Plagues in reverse. Instead of a story in which God punished those who would subject his Chosen People to slavery, and then led his People on a journey to salvation, Nikephoros punished his Chosen People, thereby leading them *from* freedom as Roman citizens *into* subjugation. Pharaoh oppressed the People of God but he ostensibly did so out of love and pride for his own people. Pharaoh was at least a good king to the Egyptians: he desired to make them rich and proud to the detriment of subject peoples. The Egyptians were punished for their Pharaoh not regarding the supreme God's regard for the Hebrews. While Pharaoh made the mistake of not fearing this God, he loved his own people. Nikephoros was the opposite. The rhetoric of the *Chronicle* described Nikephoros as an anti-Pharaoh who punished and enslaved his people and took up the role of a vengeful God against them. Associating the Ten Plagues with the Ten Evils made Nikephoros a fulfillment of the type of Pharaoh in the sense that he functioned as an anti-type of a king: devouring rather than protecting his subjects. Furthermore, in that Nikephoros had visited a level of disaster befitting a jealous deity upon those who looked to him for protection, he caused his Chosen People to forsake salvation and blaspheme God. In his faith-destroying greed, Nikephoros was depicted as not only an anti-King, but an anti-God.

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93   On the use of Old Testament imagery and to articulate ideals of imperial power under the Isaurian emperors, see: Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*.

6 The Parable of the *Keroullarios* and the All-Devourer: A Typological Reading

Fittingly, then, the final mention of Nikephoros as ὁ Παμφάγος came immediately after the Tenth Evil. As noted in this chapter's introduction, this predicate adjective had last been used for Nikephoros at his accession. In that context, it described how he forced out the repentant Irene and in his first official act as emperor established the tribunal court at the palace of the Magnaura "to dishonor and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything."[94] The closing declaration of Nikephoros the "Universal Devourer" introduced a parable told "in order to remember that man." This parable immediately followed the description of the Ten Evils and as such closed out the entry on Nikephoros' eighth year (de Boor's AM 6302).[95] It is a confusing anecdote which only becomes coherent when read through the typological reasoning identified in the imperial types and the First-Created Day thesis of the entire *Chronicle*.

In its typology the *Chronicle* made Nikephoros the opposite of the saving and merciful Christ, portraying the emperor in the image of the Antichrist. It is not unexpected that the *Chronicle* would portray an emperor in the image of the Antichrist without explicitly giving him that label. As P. Alexander has explained, "in several Byzantine apocalypses there appears a marked reluctance to use the term Antichrist; the authors prefer a series of circumlocutions." We have seen the *Chronicle* set readers up to see Nikephoros as the image of the Antichrist by labeling Constantine V the "Forerunner to the Antichrist." The reader was left to discern the Antichrist for whom Constantine V prepared the way, for the Antichrist figure would be "characterized not by a personal name but by an activity: opposition to Christ."[96]

As I just argued, through the allusion between the Ten Evils enacted by Nikephoros and the Ten Plagues enacted upon Pharaoh the *Chronicle* established a specific typological relationship between Nikephoros I and the Pharaoh of Exodus as a distorting mirror image or an antitype. Nikephoros is painted as an Antichrist through the Parable of the *Keroullarios* (ὁ κηρουλλάριος, a chandler or candle-maker) again through an antitype, or a distorted image.

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94   MS 657 / dB 479.

95   ἕνεκα μνησθῆναι καὶ τοῦτο. My translation / dB 487.30–31.

96   Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy Abrahamse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 194.

The Tenth Evil presented the loans forced upon the merchants of Constantinople as a means by which the all-devouring avaricious Nikephoros sought to acquire any wealth his subjects might obtain. The *Chronicle* then introduced the Parable of the *Keroullarios* as follows:

> And also: here is something worthy of note as a morsel, or paradigmatic example, in order to remember that man [the All-Devourer].[97]

The short story begins with the *keroullarios* summoned to an audience with the "Universal Devourer" Nikephoros I where he is made to swear on the emperor's head to the amount of money he possessed.[98]

> Some candle merchant (ὁ κηρουλλάριος) was in the Forum,
> self-sufficient by his own labors.
> The All-Devourer, when he had summoned the man, said:
> > *Place your hand upon my head, and swear to me:*
> > *How much gold do you have?*
> The Little One—declining himself as forsooth unworthy—was forced by
> > him to do it, and so admitted he possessed 100 lbs.[99]
> And so he ordered that [amount] be produced within the hour, saying:
> > *What need do you have of distraction?*
> > *Break bread with me, and take 10 lbs.*[100]
> > *and go your way, having been satisfied.*[101]

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97 C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 668) translate "paradigmatic example" (παράδειγμα) as "amusing example," but this is more, something worth being recalled.

98 On the increased importance of oath-taking in Byzantine legal proceedings from the mid-eighth century see: Marie-France Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 251–91. And now Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology*.

99 = 7,200 *nomismata*.

100 = 72 *nomismata* in *PG 1710*; other MSS = 100 *nomismata*.

101 κηρουλλάριός τις ἦν ἐν τῷ Φόρῳ ἐκ πόνων ἰδίων ἀνενδεής. τοῦτον μεταστειλάμενος ὁ παμφάγος φησίν· "θὲς τὴν χεῖρά σου κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς μου, καὶ ὄμοσόν μοι τὸ πόσος σοι χρυσός ἐστιν;" ὁ δὲ μικρὸν ὡς ἀνάξιος δῆθεν παραιτούμενος ἐβιάσθη τοῦτο παρ'αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαι, καὶ λίτρας ρ′ ἐξειπεῖν ἔχειν. καὶ τοῦτο κατὰ τὴν ὥραν προσέταξεν ἐνεχθῆναι φήσας· "σὺ τί χρείαν ἔχεις περισπασμοῦ; συναρίστησόν μοι, καὶ ἆρον νομίσματα ρ′, καὶ πορεύου ἀρκούμενος." My translation / dB 487.31–488.6.

As above, I translated the *keroullarios*' attempt to avoid Nikephoros' demand for an account of his wealth as him stating that he was "unworthy" of so much attention. A literal translation of "without honor" may in fact be a more accurate rendering of ἀνάξιος in this context for this could be not only an assertion of relative humility but a factual statement that the *keroullarios* possessed no honorific title from the court. Taking the term in this literal manner means the *keroullarios* argued that wealth should not be demanded from a Little One, someone without the *quid pro quo* of a formal honorific given in return from the emperor.[102] Regardless, the *keroullarios* was forced to admit that he had acquired one hundred pounds (talents) of gold coin from his trade. Nikephoros nevertheless ordered the money be produced, within the hour. The final address to the *keroullarios* should be imagined as though the pile of coins lay between them: having parted his subject from his wealth, the greedy Devourer-of-All ironically chides the keroullarios for his "worry," for caring about his possessions.[103] The *keroullarios* should be grateful for relief from the demanding and worrisome burden of wealth!

How was this story a "paradigmatic example" of Nikephoros, and a conclusion to not only the Ten Evils but the entire original impetus of the *Chronographia* project? On a literal level, the *keroullarios* would seem to be just the sort of individual for whom Nikephoros' measures behind the so-called Sixth Evil had been crafted. The sudden wealth of the *keroullarios* may have qualified him as a citizen who had "recovered quickly from poverty." Nikephoros might be portrayed here as fulfilling his own directive to "exact money from them as if they had found treasure." Thus, on one level the story simply amplifies the theme of Nikephoros' avarice in the final five vexations.[104]

However, Nikephoros was not simply greedy, he was ὁ Παμφάγος, the All-Devourer and an antitype of divine and earthly power. As such, the All-Devourer urging the *keroullarios* to be freed from "worry" marks him as an antitype, for the same idea was spoken by Christ in the *Gospel According to*

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102   From this perspective, the meaning of the exchange could be re-imagined more fully as: "How much money do you have?" "Majesty, this is inappropriate, I am as yet without formal honor: I am not yet incorporated into your court where I would receive the benefit of high association in exchange for such interrogation."

103   Despite the echoes of Christ's speech about worry in Matthew 6, the relevant verb used there is μεριμνάω, and the lesson is to not be anxious for "ἀρκετὸν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς" (The evil of the day is sufficient to it).

104   The reader is not invited to consider the historicity of this situation—no specific date is mentioned. The story's introduction separates the tale from the realms of time and space, whereas the Ten Evils situate the story in a *moral* universe. Thus, we are allowed to see this situation in the abstract, as the playing out of one (or all) of the Ten Evils.

Luke. There Christ used the same verb περισπάω to negatively describe Martha (sister of Mary and Lazarus) for being "distracted" (περιεσπᾶτο) about all of the service (περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν) she did to prepare a meal for Christ.[105] The association between the parable and this gospel passage is underscored by the fact that Nikephoros consoles the *keroullarios* with a meal.[106] But whereas the Christ of the Gospel gently chided Martha to not worry about the meal but to sit at his feet like her sister Mary and meditate on his teaching, the All-Devourer who "lived for Gold and not for Christ" alleviated such distraction by confiscation.[107]

If we chew longer on this "morsel or paradigm" (ἡδύσματος ἢ παραδείγματος) it becomes increasingly clear that if the Ten Evils were the argument for Nikephoros as anti-king (the "Pharaoh of the Mind"), then the parable of the *keroullarios* is the argument for Nikephoros as anti-Christ. The two concluding verbs in the parable—"to go" (πορεύομαι) and "to be satisfied" or "to have enough" (ἀρκοῦμαι)—are also the actions in the dramatic moment of a parable of Christ resonant in the contemporary Byzantine liturgical imagination: the parable of the ten virgins.[108] Several associations draw the reader's mind to this parable. First the obvious numeric correspondences in the number ten, with ten vexations, ten virgins, and ten pounds of gold. Furthermore, a *keroullarios* would, for a Constantinopolitan audience, be thought of as someone who sold both candles and oil for lamps.[109] As we will see the *Chronicle* indeed provides both linguistic and conceptual parallels between the *keroullarios* and the well-known and familiar parable of the virgin bridesmaids who needed oil with which to light their lamps.

> And at midnight a cry was heard:
>> *Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!*
> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
> And the foolish said to the wise,
>> *Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.*

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105   Gospel according to Luke 10:40. In Christ's response, he describes Martha's own state back to her: "you are troubled (μεριμνάω) and distracted (θορυβάζῃ) about many things." We may thus take this statement as a gloss on what it means to be περισπασμός. There is a conceptual resonance with Gospel according to Matthew 11:28–29, though not the explicit parallels in diction.

106   MS 669 / dB 488 (AM 6302).

107   ὁ πάντα διὰ τὸν φιλούμενον αὐτῷ χρυσὸν καὶ οὐ διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν πράττων. MS 663 / dB 483.1–2 (AM 6299).

108   Gospel according to Matthew 25:6–9.

109   Alexander P. Kazhdan, *ODB* s.v. "Keroularios."

But the wise answered, saying,

>No, lest there should not be enough [πορεύω] for us and you;
>but go [ἀρκέω] rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.[110]

This parable would not have been in the least obscure to a Constantinopolitan reader of the ninth century, having been a site of creativity in Byzantine liturgical compositions for some time. Recent research has brought evidence to light demonstrating that a service specifically dedicated to Christ as the Bridegroom was becoming established in Constantinople at this time.[111] G. Pagoulatos has traced evidence of the service in turn-of-the-century liturgical innovations in Constantinople.[112] Based directly on the parable of the ten virgins, this service

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110   μέσης δὲ νυκτὸς κραυγὴ γέγονεν, Ἰδοὺ ὁ νυμφίος, ἐξέρχεσθε εἰς ἀπάντησιν αὐτοῦ. τότε ἠγέρθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ παρθένοι ἐκεῖναι καὶ ἐκόσμησαν τὰς λαμπάδας ἑαυτῶν. αἱ δὲ μωραὶ ταῖς φρονίμοις εἶπαν, Δότε ἡμῖν ἐκ τοῦ ἐλαίου ὑμῶν, ὅτι αἱ λαμπάδες ἡμῶν σβέννυνται. ἀπεκρίθησαν δὲ αἱ φρόνιμοι λέγουσαι, Μήποτε οὐκ ἀρκέσῃ ἡμῖν καὶ ὑμῖν· πορεύεσθε μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ ἀγοράσατε ἑαυταῖς. Gospel of Matthew 25:6–9.

111   Gerasimos P. Pagoulatos, *Tracing the Bridegroom in Dura: The Bridal Initiation Service of the Dura-Europos Christian Baptistry as Early Evidence of the Use of Images in Christian and Byzantine Worship* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008). On the development of services in seventh through ninth-century Constantinople with an increasingly dramatic or narrative power see Egon Wellesz, "The Nativity Drama of the Byzantine Church," *Journal of Roman Studies* 37, no. 1–2 (1947): 145–51.

112   Pagoulatos, *Tracing the Bridegroom in Dura*, 30. The idea of the service dates back to the third-century baptismal rituals celebrated in, for instance, the house church preserved at Dura Europas. The earliest direct evidence that the service became a part of the imperial liturgy only comes from the eleventh century. Nevertheless, this distinctly Syrian-Palestinian rite seems to have been brought to Constantinople between the late eighth and the middle of the ninth century. Pagoulatos, *Tracing the Bridegroom in Dura*, 24, in reference to the eleventh century codex no. 788 held in the University Library of Athens. For a discussion of the relationship between the interaction between developments in eleventh-century art and this liturgy see: Hans Belting, "An Image and Its Function in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no. 34–35 (1980): 1–16, especially 4–7. The Bridegroom Matins was promoted and practiced by George the Synkellos' demographic: iconophile monks with connections to Syria-Palestine. Pagoulatos, *Tracing the Bridegroom in Dura*, especially 28. And see discussion of the ninth-century Patmos Codex no. 266 at pp. 33, 132–33. Given George's connection to the "Old Lavra" of St. Sabas in Palestine, it is a fair guess that he lived in one of the monastic communities in which the Bridegroom Matins was being developed into the form that would gain acceptance in Constantinople. On the incorporation of Palestinian liturgical practices in the liturgy of Constantinople during the eighth and ninth centuries see: Robert F. Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–81): 45–75, especially 65–66, 72. For an alternative trajectory on the relationship of images of Christ the bridegroom to the god Dionysios see: Gary Vikan, "Art and Marriage in Early Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): 162.

placed the gathered faithful in the dramatic position of the ten virgins awaiting the arrival of the Bridegroom, interpreted to be Christ himself.[113]

It has already been argued that the *Chronicle* seems to have relied on readers' familiarity with the homiletics of the patriarch John Chrysostom (r. 398–404).[114] In his homily on Matthew 25, Chrysostom invoked an economic argument to explain the lesson of the Ten Virgins that resonates with the *Chronicle*'s account of the *keroullarios*. Chrysostom built on the fact that in the original text Christ had told of five wise and five foolish bridesmaids waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom. He began his exegesis by asserting that the wise virgins were wise for making intelligent transactions in almsgiving in order to be prepared to wait for the Bridegroom.[115] He then focused on the idea that his congregation replicated the foolish virgins' error, to misunderstand the economy of salvation: "Heaven is a business and an enterprise and we are negligent."[116] Relying on the verbal similarity between oil (ἔλαιον) and mercy (ἔλεος) Chrysostom's allegorical reading of the foolish virgins asserted the bridesmaids mistakenly thought that their "light" (virginity) alone was enough to gain entrance to the "wedding feast" (the kingdom of heaven), not realizing that "oil" (almsgiving) was needed as payment.[117] According to Chrysostom's interpretation, the merchant in the parable (from whom the foolish virgins should acquire oil) stood for the poor (πτωχοί). The virgins had merely needed to turn to these poor to "give bread and seize paradise."[118] Chrysostom's conclusion makes the same moral connection between the parable of the Ten Virgins

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113   On the harmony of this reading with the formation of the liturgical self: Derek Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects: Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 130–63.

114   Chapter 3, section 2.1. See a direct citation of John Chrysostom's commentary on Matthew in the *Chronographia* at AT 5 / M 3.19–22.

115   See Angeliki E. Laiou, "Law, Justice, and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries," in *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth–Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), 151–86, especially 159n124 on the economic mindset within a long history of thinking deeply about identity, the self, and difference.

116   Ἐμπορία καὶ πραγματεία ὁ οὐρανὸς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀμελοῦμεν. John Chrysostom, *De paenitentia hom. 3*. PG 49, 294.5–6. Translated in Gus George Christo, *St. John Chrysostom: On Repentance and Almsgiving*, The Fathers of the Church 96 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 32 (section 8).

117   "Virginity is the light, almsgiving the oil." Τὸ γὰρ πῦρ ἐστιν ἡ παρθενία, τὸ δὲ ἔλαιον ἐστὶν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη. John Chrysostom, *De paenitentia hom. 3*. PG 49, 294.8–9. Translated Christo, *On Repentance and Almsgiving*, 32 (section 7).

118   Δὸς ἄρτον, καὶ λαβὲ παράδεισον. John Chrysostom, *De paenitentia hom. 3*. PG 49.294.5–7. Translated Christo, *On Repentance and Almsgiving*, 32 (section 8).

and his present audience as the moral lesson that seems to be the point of the Parable of the *Keroullarios* in the *Chronicle*: just as the bridesmaids in Chrysostom's sermon were convicted for having refused to care for the poor due to their own love of money, the *Chronicle* accused Nikephoros for his abuse of the poor (vexations one through five) and his greed (vexations six through ten).[119] The sin of the foolish virgins according to Chrysostom equates to the very greed of which the *Chronicle* accused Nikephoros.

The assumption of an intertwined reading runs even deeper, for the All-Devourer's interaction with the *keroullarios* also seems to supply the portion of the parable missing in the gospel: the actual transaction between the foolish virgins and the merchant from whom they were meant to buy oil. Taking heed of the lesson of this parable, the emperor should have sought out the poor and "purchased" his oil (and so the prize of salvation) by giving alms. Instead he did the opposite of Christ's advice: he tried to steal his prize by simply demanding his subjects' wealth. Nikephoros failed to enter Chrysostom's marketplace of salvation, misunderstanding the very concept of mercy.

The *Chronicle* ended its parallels between the two parables here. But quite possibly it did so to leave the reader to supply the apocalyptic conclusion. In the gospel parable it is just at this moment that the anticipated Bridegroom appears:

> And while [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came,
> and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding;
> and the door was shut.
> Afterward the [foolish] virgins came also, saying,
>> *Lord, Lord, open to us!*
> But he answered and said,
>> *Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.*[120]

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119 "They did not possess almsgiving (light) along with virginity. This statement is worthy of much shame. You overthrew pleasure but did not despise money. O virgin you, who denied the worldly life and crucified yourself to it, yet love money!" ἐπειδὴ μετὰ τῆς παρθενίας τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην οὐκ εἶχον. Πολλῆς αἰσχύνης τὸ ῥῆμα ἄξιον· ἡδονὴν καταπαλαίσασα, χρημάτων οὐ κατεφρόνησας· ἀλλὰ παρθένος ἀποταξαμένη τῷ βίῳ, καὶ σταυρωθεῖσα χρημάτων ἐρᾷς. John Chrysostom, *De paenitentia hom. 3*. PG 49, 297.46–49. Translated Christo, *On Repentance and Almsgiving*, 36 (section 13).

120 οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδητε ταῦτα πάντα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται. ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τῶν οὐρανῶν οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατὴρ μόνος.... γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποίᾳ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται. Gospel according to Matthew 25:10–12.

When you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. But *about that day or hour no one knows*, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Therefore: keep watch, because *you do not know on what day your Lord will come*.[121]

A meditative Byzantine reader following through this inter-textual association would find the idea of the First-Created Day reborn in their mind, with its final instance to come: that last day of the apocalyptic revelation of the returning Christ.[122]

Indeed, by the ninth century the use of the Parable of the Ten Virgins (or the Parable of the Bridegroom) was a standard means of invoking impending apocalypse. The sixth-century hymns of Romanos the Melodist had long been incorporated into the hymnography of the cathedral of Hagia Sophia.[123] Romanos had composed a *kontakion* which placed the chanter in the position of the five foolish virgins, calling out to the Lord and bridegroom "Open!" as though trapped behind the shut door of the parable. In his fourth stanza, Romanos described the experience of these excluded virgins, the bridesmaids, as an experience of the apocalyptic end times:

But as [Christ] foretold, all things will happen:
Famines and earthquakes and plagues come to pass.
And nation will rise against nation,
Fearful things within and without,
    they have mustered in battle
To be saved anywhere is impossible,
    for there is danger everywhere:
    Refuge is nowhere, flight is for all;
The gate has been shut, compassion has been sealed,
Not desired within, now we cry out without:
    Open![124]

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121   Gospel according to Matthew 24: 33–36, 42. Emphasis mine.

122   On just such readers, see: Derek Krueger, "Beyond Eden: Placing Adam, Eve, and Humanity in Byzantine Hymns," in *Placing Ancient Texts: The Ritual and Rhetorical Use of Space*, ed. Mika Ahuvia and Alexander Kocar, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 14 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 167–78.

123   Krueger, *Liturgical Subjects*, 65.

124   ἀλλ' ὡς προεῖπε πάντα γενήσεται·καὶ λιμοὶ καὶ [λο]ιμοὶ καὶ σεισμοὶ συνεχεῖς, καὶ ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος ἐγήγερται· τὰ ἔσω φοβερά, τὰ ἔξω δὲ μάχης πεπλήρωνται· οὐκ ἔστι ποῦ σωθῆναι· πανταχοῦ γὰρ

The *Chronicle* had provided images of famines, earthquakes, plagues, and war in the years leading up to this point. The emperors just preceding Nikephoros had overseen these very events in their own times: Constantine V the "Forerunner to the Antichrist" ruled through droughts, plague, and seven earthquakes,[125] and in the year Irene blinded her son Constantine VI there was another.[126] However, the era of Nikephoros was even worse: a Byzantine defeat in battle was described under every entry.[127] In the entry immediately preceding the current passage, Nikephoros' swindling his troops of their pay was described as two natural disasters.[128]

All of these allusions are invitations for a ninth-century Constantinopolitan audience to see Nikephoros in the image of the Antichrist by the end of this entry for his eighth year (de Boor's AM 6302 or AD 809/10). I have documented the incessant castigation of Nikephoros I from the very moment of his accession to the throne, the accompanying picture of a world on fire, and the swirling inferences of apocalyptic types.[129] The Parable of the *Keroullarios* as an image of the Bridegroom and the Virgins allows the prefatory injunction to the reader to echo with the command of the parable: "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." The

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ὁ κίνδυνος· οὐδαμοῦ καταφυγή, φυγὴ δὲ πᾶσιν· ἡ πύλη κέκλεισται, ἡ εὐσπλαγχνία ἐσφρα[γί]
σθη· οὐ γὰρ ἠβουλήθημεν ἔνδοθεν εἶναι, ⟨νῦν ἔξω βοῶμεν· «Ἄνοιξον»⟩. *Canticum* 51.4. Ed.
and trans. José Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*, vol. 5, SC 283 (Paris:
Éditions du Cerf, 1981), 302.

125 Droughts: MS 608 / dB 441 (AM 6258); MS 601 / dB 435 (AM 6255). Plague: MS 585–86/
dB 423–24 (AM 6238). Earthquakes: MS 639 / dB 464 (AM 6282, [AD 790]), MS 594 / dB 430
(AM 6248, [AD 755]), MS 588 / dB 426 (AM 6241, [AD 748]), MS 585 / dB 422 (AM 6238,
[AD 745]), MS 579 / dB 418 (AM 6235, [AD 742]), MS 577 / dB 416 (AM 6234, [AD 741]),
MS 572 / dB 412 (AM 6232, [AD 739]).

126 MS 646 / dB 470 (AM 6288, [AD 796]).

127 Even if in reality the outcome had been ambiguous if not actually positive, as in AM 6300
(AD 807/8), when the destruction of Rhodes by an ʿAbbasid fleet is emphasized over the
successful defense of the fort there and the subsequent destruction of the fleet by storm.

128 "Desisting somewhat, the wretches [the soldiers] abandoned their course of action and
withdrew to a hill, crying, 'Lord have mercy!' as if it were an earthquake or a drought....
On account of their misfortune they called the Bosporus the 'River of Fire.'" οἱ δὲ μικρὸν
παυσάμενοι βουνόν τινα κατέλαβον οἱ τρισάθλιοι τῆς ἐν χερσὶν ἐπιλαθόμενοι πράξεως, τό, "κύριε
ἐλέησον," ἀναβοῶντες ὡς ἐπί τινι σεισμῷ ἢ ἀνομβρία.... οἱ δὲ διὰ τὴν συμφορὰν πύρινον ποταμὸν
τὸ Πέραμα προσηγόρευσαν. MS 666 / dB 485–86 (AM 6301 [AD 808/9]). For references see:
the river spewed from the mouth of the serpent in the Apocalypse of John 12.15–16; the
river of fire in Daniel 7:10.

129 The *Chronicle* limits its use of phrases with apocalyptic connections, preferring to work
with images. For a few examples, however, see: Timothy the Cat called the "Forerunner to
the Antichrist" MS 170 / dB 111.1 (AM 5950, [AD 457/8]); and, "Abomination of Desolation"
used to describe the fall of Jerusalem to ʿUmar. MS 417 / dB 339 (AM 6127 [AD 634/5]).

Chronographia's First-Created Day typology tied together all time and time's reckoning by making the Creation and the Incarnation, the Resurrection from the Ark and the Resurrection from the Tomb into both historical events and present events in the liturgical life of the church. The reader of the *Chronicle* had been conditioned to look for a coming First-Created Day: four First-Created Days had passed and yet the Last Day remained, the Day of Christ's return.[130] But in the post-Incarnation Era, the final instance of the recurring First-Created Day could not be dated, for the next salvific day was the Last, the end of time.

According to Christ's own words it was not possible for an angel, or even Christ himself to perceive the date of the final day, the ultimate First-Created Day to inaugurate eternity. Presumably then, neither could a chronographer. The *Chronicle*'s impetus was to equip a reader to decide for themselves what to make of the entirety of the past. The orthodox Christian could know all past time, but future time was another issue, for the "Day and the Hour" were hidden. An author could do no more than allude to this event, and warn his audience to watch carefully by understanding what sort of deeds their emperor had done, and thereby place him within the typological spectrum which the *Chronicle* had provided.

7   The First End(ing) of the *Chronographia*

Nikephoros' portrait as both the fulfillment of Pharaoh's type and as the image of the Antichrist was built upon historical typologies set up by the First-Created Day thesis. The interconnectedness of historical typologies and the chronological argument of the First-Created Day was stated explicitly by George the Synkellos in his account of the Resurrection of Christ:

> For orthodox Christians, this day was rightly considered the first Pascha. Not with ancient leaven and in flight from the Pharaoh perceptible to the senses in Egypt and his ruthless taskmasters, [but] rather it was *in direct apprehension of the Egypt perceptible to the mind, which is evil and ignorance, and the Devil, who is its author.* Surpassing the types and the shadows based in the law, they delight in the true lamb of God who takes

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130   Matthew 24:33–36, 42.

away the sin of the world ... and by his grace and redemption, they are introduced to the heavenly Jerusalem ... for he had brought together existence in a lasting relationship.[131]

Reading the *Chronicle* in its ninth-century form—reading the beginning of the present era from the Roman conquest of Jerusalem—makes it possible to see how the typological connection between Nikephoros in the image of Pharaoh and of the Antichrist was set into the structure of the text from the beginning.

By now it should be clear that in stating that the *Chronicle* made a philosophical and historiographical case against Nikephoros I through a series of typologies I do not mean that it did not have political implications and concerns for its present. The *Chronicle* set its readers up to recognize Nikephoros as the promised fulfillment of the Pharaoh "perceptible to the mind" and in this way fulfilled the promise of the *Preface* to give the reader a clear exposition of the present age and some benefit from the past. The *Chronicle* provided this present, practical benefit by crafting its imperial portraits into typologies. Chapter 5 explored types that presented cautionary warnings. The military successes of Herakleios and Leo III did not prevent their susceptibility to deception by heretical ideas (monotheletism and iconoclasm) or the ruination of their empires. Leo III's son and successor, Constantine V—the "forerunner to the Antichrist"—then established the final warning of the doom to come, culminating in the image of Nikephoros as the new Pharaoh, the Antichrist himself.

In this chapter I have argued that this historical polemic was the *Chronicle*'s entire rhetorical goal. It is true that the form in which the *Chronographia* has been preserved and transmitted through the centuries has its "end" or final entry, not in Nikephoros' eighth year (AM 6302), but three years later at the accession of Leo V (AM 6305 or AD 812/13). However, George the Synkellos claimed his work would be found "both dependable and equally accurate ... up to the current 6302nd year." I have taken that date at face value, as evidence that this was the original conception of the end of the *Chronographia* project. While previous scholars have not even entertained such an idea, it needs to

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131   Αὕτη Χριστιανοῖς ὀρθοδόξοις πρῶτον πάσχα καλῶς ἐχρημάτισεν, οὐκ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ καὶ φυγῇ τοῦ κατ᾽ Αἴγυπτον αἰσθητοῦ Φαραῶ καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ πικρῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν καταλήψει τῆς νοητῆς Αἰγύπτου, τῆς κακίας καὶ ἀγνοίας καὶ τοῦ ταύτης ἀρχηγοῦ διαβόλου, ὑπὲρ τοὺς τύπους καὶ τὴν νομικὴν σκιὰν αὐτῷ τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἀμνῷ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ αἴροντι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου κατατρυφῶσιν ... καὶ τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι καὶ ἀπολυτρώσει πρὸς τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐπειγομένοις ... συντάξας τὸ εἶναι τῇ σχετικῇ ἀλληλουχίᾳ. AT 464 / M 389–90.

be seriously considered for a number of reasons. The *Preface* of Theophanes states that the chronicler had received from George the Synkellos an impetus or an "end" towards which to write. If—as seems likely—this would mean that George the Synkellos had already mapped out the idea of the *Chronographia* and communicated that idea to Theophanes as the "impetus" of the work, then he certainly would have communicated (if not written out) to his "close friend" how he intended the work to end in AM 6302. In the present chapter I have also pointed out the identifiable structural unity in the original entries about Nikephoros covering AM 6295–AM 6302. These entries are a rhetorical set piece which begins and ends by labeling Nikephoros as the Devourer of All.

To read the *Chronicle* was to engage with its imperial portraits as *Kaiserkritik* and thereby to judge one's own emperor. In denigrating the regime of Nikephoros I up through AM 6302, the *Chronicle*'s apocalyptic typologies justified armed opposition to the present emperor. Whether or not the *synkellos* of the rebellion against Nikephoros was George the Synkellos, the more emphatic point for the *Chronicle* was to connect the two "Armenian" networks who led rebellions against Nikephoros I by beginning the reign of that emperor with the revolt of Bardanes (AM 6295–6296) and ending it with the revolt of the *quaestor* Arsaber and the *tagmata* (AM 6299–6301). A reader who accepted this portrait of Nikephoros, who realized Nikephoros in the image of the Antichrist, made common cause with these rebels.

I have argued that the *Chronographia*'s portraits of past bishops and emperors as types in an eschatological framework combined particular political virtues and vices to give meaning to the reigns of recent emperors. In the end this framework evoked the Antichrist and the *eschaton*—the end of time. I do not wish this statement to imply that I envision an audience of panicked skywatchers. Instead, I see the eschaton of the *Chronographia* within the context J. Palmer has laid out for the whole of the Early Middle Ages: the *eschaton* was imminent, and everywhere, and quotidian.[132] Palmer's framing does not mean the idea of the end of days was meaningless, but that Apocalypse was how the Early Middle Ages conceptualized its future-driving energies and anxieties— energies that have modern parallels in our idea of Nuclear Holocaust or Climate Change. An End is coming, an End is near: this present day is lived in constant anticipation of that anticipated but unknown tomorrow. I read the *Chronographia* project in this same spirit. The project was a political manifesto framed within an account of the universe, a historical call to arms by a righteous *synkellos* against an unjust emperor, an erudite reasoned call for

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132   James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

revolt from one of the highest imperial officials in the empire whose *auctoritas* gave heft to the critique. This was not an innocuous antiquarian compilation of some random historical notices. This was an extended, focused historical argument with a specific political end.

In the next chapter, chapter 8, I turn to the second ending of the *Chronographia* project: the final three entries covering AM 6303–6305 or AD 811–813. In doing so I turn from reading the *Chronographia* as a "public" history that could in theory be shared by all Romans. On the level of a public politics the original impetus for the *Chronographia* had been to bring together the whole of the Roman past in a way that called for a new Roman political consensus in the present. But I argue that these final entries re-framed the *Chronographia* as a "private" history.[133] By this I mean that the new ending was deeply embedded in the needs of a specific socio-political network (or community) and so was written to meet that group's specific needs. The original impetus of the project was to level an invective against Nikephoros I, to sweep the blinders from the eyes of the elite of Constantinople and show them what a monster their emperor was. But once that emperor had died, the lesson from his reign could no longer be a warning that doom was impending if Nikephoros continued in power. In death, Nikephoros became just another imperial type (or antitype). The last three entries, written after the death of the All-Devourer, represent a different impetus. Someone—likely Theophanes—added these entries which told of the death of Nikephoros, the short reign of Michael I, and then brought Leo V the Armenian to the throne in the very last entry for AM 6305 (AD 813). An audience of elite Constantinopolitans would have known well how much these few years had changed the status of the community whose perspective had been articulated and promoted by the narrative of the *Chronographia* project. The professed leader of the last revolt against Nikephoros, Arsaber, had been punished, beaten, and banished in AD 808. However, in AD 813 this same Arsaber would find himself the father-in-law to the new emperor, Leo V. In the next chapter, I describe how to read these entries in the context of that new reality.

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133   Private in the sense used by Janet L. Nelson, "Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard," *Speculum* 60, no. 2 (1985): 251–93.

PART 3

The Ends of the Chronographia

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AD 815 and the End of History

In the previous chapter I argued that the original impetus of the *Chrono-graphia* project, its end or goal, led up to the entry for Nikephoros' eighth year, namely AM 6302. This year was the work's authorial present, noted as such from the very beginning of the *Chronographia* project when George the Synkellos declared his work "both dependable and equally accurate … up to the current 6302nd year." Without any evidence to the contrary, I assume George had mapped out his *Chronographia* project to this date, and that this was the impetus, the end, the idea or plan which he communicated to Theophanes. The project was designed to be fulfilled in the present moment of AM 6302. Even if this was somehow not the actual plan shared between our two histori-cal authors, the work undeniably asks its readers to read it in this manner.

The entry for AM 6302 (AD 809/10) brought the many strands of the project together in an invective, a set piece portraying Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) as the All-Devourer. In chapter 7 I explained how that entry also put the impetus on the reader to decide whether they would affirm this portrait of Nikephoros. The reader is put in a position where they must accept or reject the description of Nikephoros' actions not as merely evil, but as an image of the Antichrist. A reader who acquiesced to the validity of this image would be putting them-selves on the side of those who the *Chronicle* arrayed against Nikephoros: first empress Irene, then Bardanes Tourkos, and then Arsaber the *quaestor* and the officials and soldiers who joined his revolt. The connection of the work's rhetor-ical, polemical goals with these contemporary individuals and their associates meant that the *Chronographia* project had immediate political implications in the world of ninth-century Constantinople.[1]

In this chapter, I describe the *Chronographia* project's political implications. I first expand on the direct and indirect references to the above individuals throughout the *Chronicle* to define the political alliances with which the proj-ect associated itself. I then apply the interests of these alliances to the project's coda—the final entries of AM 6303–6305—as the best source available for the issues and alliances at stake in the *Chronographia*'s completion. The rhetorical

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1 On the connection between political factions and historical texts in general, see: Dimitris Krallis, "Historiography as Political Debate," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 599–614.

goals of these entries are complementary to those I have found in the entire project, but they are also different in some specific and telling ways. By reading these differences in light of the alliances just defined, I am able to explain the rhetorics of this new ending as an effort to reposition the work in light of the significant changes in political circumstances between AD 810 and AD 815. This makes it possible to read the last entries of the project in an entirely different light than scholars have done until now. Scholars have held that the iconophile authors of the text must have completed the work in 813 since they could not possibly have known that Leo V (whom the *Chronicle* calls "most pious") would call a church council to reopen the question of icons and would then decide in favor of an iconoclast policy in 815. In light of the rhetorics of the *Chronicle* and its professed alliances, I instead find that the work most likely described Leo V as it did specifically *because* the authors knew Leo had reinstituted iconoclasm. The most plausible scenario is that the *Chronicle*'s final entries were written in 815, or just after, by iconophiles within the inner circles of Leo V. The end of the *Chronicle* is their response to the new emperor.

1   Who Was against Nikephoros? The Faction behind the *Chronographia* Project

To make sense of the discrepancies in rhetoric between the driving goal of the *Chronographia* project up through AM 6302 and the final entries of AM 6303 to AM 6305, we must turn to the private histories behind the work.[2] Through its account of the reigns of Irene and Nikephoros I, the *Chronicle* revealed clues to these private histories not only with its redemption of Irene and invective against Nikephoros, but by valorizing groups and factions who aligned with its positions on imperial politics.

I have already noted one aspect of the private history of the project: the ambitions of the authorial persona. The intellectual and cultural impetus for constructing the *Chronographia* was the opportunity afforded by the condemnation of Eusebius of Caesarea at the second council of Nicaea (AD 787). George the Synkellos used this event to re-write the chronography of empire under his new concept of historical time. Furthermore, George's idea of the First-Created Day applied the experience of the Incarnation in liturgical worship to the epistemological project of chronology. In its historical march up to its present day, the work's impetus expanded from these intellectual ambitions

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2 My approach here is deeply informed by Janet L. Nelson, "Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard," *Speculum* 60, no. 2 (1985): 251–93.

into a series of imperial types. The succession of the images of emperors led up to AM 6302 (AD 810) when Nikephoros I was at the height of his powers. At that point empress Irene was praised as the foil to Nikephoros I, the All-Devourer. Favor for Irene was not merely a claim about her historical legacy: it directly justified actual, recent revolts against Nikephoros. Any reader of the work thereby implicitly sided with the pro-rebellion, anti-Nikephoran politics of the authorial persona. In siding with this position, with which actual historical persons in Constantinople ca. AD 810 were readers of the *Chronicle* implicitly aligning themselves?

We can constitute the socio-political contours of the political faction behind the *Chronicle*—and get a fuller picture of the private politics behind this history of the empire—by connecting the dots between groups that were either positively or negatively portrayed in the run-up to the work's conclusion. I begin this task by returning to a passage on the re-discovery of the relics of St. Euphemia under Constantine V to note the historical association claimed there between the authorial persona and the empress Irene. This leads to identifying other figures whom the text aligned with the empress and her policies. While this group is largely constituted of individuals known to posterity as "iconophiles," it is not defined by a stance on icons but by alignment with Irene's policies of low taxes, general liberality with the imperial treasury, and religious accommodation.[3] This is clear from a passage siding with patriarch Nikephoros against the iconophile monks from the monastery of St. John in Stoudios. The larger political network behind the work is revealed by the positive account of the rebellious groups who revolt under, or associate themselves with, prominent Armenians such as Arsaber the *quaestor* (AD 808–811) and Bardanes Tourkos (AD 802). I then examine how what we know of the historic interests of these groups in ca. 815 aligns with the *Chronicle*'s entries for AM 6303–6305. I conclude with a discussion of what now seems the most likely date for the completion of the *Chronographia* project as it survives today—ca. 815—and how reading this masterwork of chronography in light of what we know about Constantinople in that year reveals new evidence about the internal politics of the groups around Leo V in the wake of his declaration for iconoclasm.

1.1 *Rebels for Irene: Pulcheria, Euphemia, and the Author*

To make the connection between the authorial persona and the faction behind the *Chronographia* I return to a narrative thread mentioned in chapter 6:

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3 Contrast the portrait composed in Nicola Bergamo, *Irene, imperatore di Bisanzio*, Historica 6 (Milan: Jouvence 2015).

the ongoing political significance of St. Euphemia. St. Euphemia had first appeared in the *Chronographia* when during the joint reign of Pulcheria and Theodosios II her relics were translated to Alexandria.[4] A later passage on the re-discovery of the relics of St. Euphemia connected the authorial persona to Euphemia, to Constantine VI, to the empress Irene, and to the patriarch Tarasios.[5]

Under the entry which K. de Boor labels AM 6258 (our AD 765/6) the *Chronicle* used a story about Euphemia's relics to condemn Constantine V as the "Forerunner to the Antichrist" through his treatment of her saintly body. According to the text Constantine V was so incensed that relics of the saints inspired prayers for their intercession that he took up the reliquary of St. Euphemia and cast it into the sea. When Constantine V cast Euphemia's holy body into the Bosphoros the the *Chronicle* portrays the emperor as rejecting the saint, the council of Chalcedon which Euphemia facilitated, and the empress Pulcheria who had honored her.[6]

The *Chronicle* breaks from its historical narrative of Constantine V's desecration (in AD 765/6) to state that the relics had been lost for decades but that the author himself saw the relics miraculously recovered. In the fourth indiction under the joint rule of Constantine VI and Irene, this very reliquary of Euphemia was rediscovered washed up on the shores of Lemnos. It was then translated to Constantinople.

> I myself saw this … twenty-two years after the criminal [Constantine V]'s death … in the company of the most pious emperors and Tarasios the most holy patriarch and, along with them, I kissed it, unworthy as I was to have been granted so signal a grace.[7]

Constantine V died on 14 September 775, the *Chronicle*'s AM 6267. Adding twenty-two years (counting inclusively) results in AM 6268 (AD 795/6) which is indeed the fourth indiction, and the year before Constantine was blinded (in the summer of 797). The relics of St. Euphemia would have been viewed by the

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4 MS 149 / dB 95 (AM 5932).

5 MS 607–8 / dB 439–40 (AM 6258).

6 The relics of St. Euphemia were associated with the reign of Pulcheria through their rediscovery under Irene, and the fact that the Council of Chalcedon at the end of Pulcheria's reign was held at the purpose built martyrium which first housed them.

7 MS 607–8 / dB 440 (AM 6258).

emperors, patriarch and the chronicler between September 795 and August 796, excluding March and April when Constantine VI was on campaign.[8]

We should actually expect to find a *synkellos* in such a gathering: here literally embodying the function of his office by standing between *imperium* and *ecclesia*. Even if this passage was not in fact written by George the Synkellos it is written to imply that it was. Any alert reader would assume this to be the historical author speaking as the actual *synkellos* "of Tarasios," appointed by Constantine VI in 795/6 to be in constant contact between Constantine, Irene, and Tarasios. In this reading a reader would take this to mean that in the context of his office George the Synkellos was present for the reception of St. Euphemia and placed his own lips upon the body of the saint. We have seen how the narrative of the *Chronicle* connected Pulcheria to Irene through St. Euphemia. Even if one does not follow this presumption about the historical author, it is undeniable that the authorial persona in the story of the rediscovery of Euphemia's relics is associated with her cult and the three most powerful individuals in the empire. This connection not only helps to explain the defense of *both* the Empress Irene and Emperor Constantine VI, but connects these figures to the community behind the *Chronographia* project. Who else did the text align with the empress Irene and her policies?

1.2   *Rebels against Avarice: Support Bardanes, Oppose the Magnaura*

To pursue the community or network behind the *Chronicle* I turn to its account of the transition between the reign of Irene and that of Nikephoros I. According to the *Chronicle* the very first act of Nikephoros I was to make a significant change in judicial procedure in Constantinople via a new court in the public-facing imperial throne room of the Magnaura court. This new court took over a number of the jurisdictions previously under the civic court of the *quaestor* of the city of Constantinople. The *Chronicle*'s rhetoric frames this administrative action into a reason to rebel against Nikephoros by explaining it as "evil and unjust" and claiming its purpose was "not to give the poor their due … but to dishonor and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything, which, indeed, [Nikephoros] did."[9] The rhetoric of the passage also implies to its readers that the founding of the court in the Magnaura did away

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8   See chapter 2, section 3. The solution that fits the current evidence is that sometime between September 795 and September 796 George the Synkellos, having only just been appointed earlier that year as *synkellos*, witnessed the ceremonial return of the relics of St. Euphemia with the emperors Constantine and Irene and the patriarch Tarasios.

9   MS 657 / dB 479 (AM 6295).

with the specific political virtues—liberality and generosity to both monks and laity—which it used to valorize the latter part of Irene's reign. In this way the narrative of Nikephoros' reign begins by associating the maintenance of the judicial powers of the *quaestor* with Irene's liberality and with rebellious action against Nikephoros.[10] It implies that those who would revolt against Nikephoros are (by implication) advocates for sharing power and supporting the poor.[11]

The revolt of the Armenian Bardanes Tourkos (or Bardas the Turk) follows on the discussion of the Magnaura court. That revolt began on 19 July AD 803 when the *strategos* of the *Anatolikon Thema*, Bardanes Tourkos, was acclaimed by his army. As was emphasized in chapter 7 (sections 1 and 2) the *Chronicle* makes every effort—both with rhetoric and narrative structure—to connect Bardanes' revolt with the legacy of Irene the martyr-empress. The revolt was introduced just after a summary of the transition to the reign of Nikephoros I, who in "wickedness and avarice" seized power. The "Devourer of All ... [was] unable even for a short time to hide by means of dissimulation his innate wickedness and avarice,"[12] directly opposing "the liberalities of the pious Irene."[13] The accounts of Irene and Bardanes are also interwoven: the story of Nikephoros unjustly seizing power from Irene moves directly into an account of the revolt of Bardanes, returns to record Irene's death after being lied to by Nikephoros, and returns again to Bardanes to record how he was blinded and punished after also being lied to by Nikephoros.

The way in which Bardanes' story is told frames him as a fellow-victim of the evils of Nikephoros and a champion of Irene's political virtues. Bardanes is described as attempting to refuse his troops' demands that he seize control of the empire. Furthermore, Bardanes progressed no farther than Bithynia when he realized the people of Constantinople opposed his claims.[14] He would not proceed against Nikephoros militarily: "a massacre of Christians should

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10   I studied the implied slight to the court of the *quaestor* in the context of Nikephoros' Ten Evils under the entry for AM 6302. In chapter 7 section 5 I pointed out that the *quaestor* would have been the official most directly impacted by Nikephoros' actions. Nikephoros subsumed the job of the *quaestor* into his own imperial bureaucracy. The *quaestor* Arsaber was, of course, the leader of the revolt in 808.

11   L. Brubaker and J. Haldon suggest the *Chronicle* promotes "opposition both to the emperor's fiscal as well as his religious/ecclesiastical policies" in Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 361.

12   MS 657 / dB 478 (AM 6295).

13   MS 657 / dB 478–9 (AM 6295).

14   Specifically he halted at the military encampment of Malagina in the Sangarius valley; the standard gathering point for the armies of the East in preparation for a campaign.

not occur on his account."[15] For Bardanes, "filled with the fear of God," sur-render had become the only option. Patriarch Tarasios extracted Nikephoros' pledge that Bardanes "would remain unharmed and unpunished together with all his companions."[16] This narrative makes Bardanes and Irene both victims of Nikephoros' lies.[17] The *Chronicle* summarizes its perspective on the entire sequence of events: no one "would be able to give an adequate account of the deeds committed by [Nikephoros] in those days by God's dispensation and on account of our sins."[18]

Irene and Bardanes were a united front against Nikephoros. Due to Nikephoros' greed the good empress Irene had died and the philanthropic Bardanes—a potential good emperor—had in good faith declined to seize the empire only to be oppressed, lied to, and mutilated. Nikephoros' evil and incompetence contrast with Irene and Bardanes' righteousness and public support. By interweaving the story of Irene's death with Bardanes' rebellion his followers are associated with her positive virtues and both are associated with opposition to the foundation of the Magnaura court. Before turning to the significance of this latter association (revealed towards the end of Nikephoros' reign) an intervening passage indicates the ecclesiastical politics of the *Chronographia* project.

1.3   *Rebels for Grace: Patriarch Nikephoros and His* Οἰκονομία

Though all of the associations noted thus far were pro-icon, iconophilism does not define the *Chronicle*'s outlook. In fact, the *Chronicle* distinguished itself quite clearly from the most historically well-known faction of pro-icon Constantinopolitans, the monastic community of St. John in Stoudios. A carefully-crafted passage drove a wedge between these Stoudites and the group

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15   MS 657 / dB 479 (AM 6295).

16   At Bardanes's blinding it is emphasized how fit he was for office. He was humble and fully supported by the troops and when his blinding on the island of Prote became known, it was to the horror of "the patriarch, the Senate, and all God-fearing people." MS 659 / dB 480 (AM 6296). The abhorrence for Nikephoros' deed was felt by the entire political community of the empire.

17   Nikephoros went back on his word to allow Irene to stay in Constantinople and instead exiled her to the Prince's Island of Prinkipios. Likewise, immediately upon Bardanes' accepting monastic tonsure at his own island monastery of Prote (modern Kınlaıda), the *Chronographia* notes that Nikephoros broke that oath just as he had with Irene. Irene had only just been removed from her own monastery on another of the "Prince's Islands," namely Prinkipios (modern Büyükada). Nikephoros had promised Bardanes to "not harm him in any respect," but he went on to seize Bardanes' fortune and oppress the officers and landowners of the *Themata,* the supporters of his revolt. MS 658 / dB 480.

18   MS 659–60 / dB 480–81 (AM 6296).

behind the *Chronographia* project by identifying the Stoudites' antagonism with the patriarch Nikephoros I. Under Nikephoros' seventh year (AM 6301 or AD 808/809) in the second indiction it is stated:

> Theodore, abbot of Stoudios, and his brother Joseph, the archbishop of Thessalonica, along with the recluse Platon and their other monks withdrew from communion with Nikephoros, the most holy patriarch, on account of the *oikonomos* Joseph who had unlawfully married Constantine and Theodote. Seizing this opportunity, the emperor Nikephoros assembled many bishops and abbots and ordered that a synod be held against them. By this means they were expelled from their monastery and from the City and were banished in the month of January of the second indiction.[19]

A clear line is drawn here between the Stoudites and the patriarch Nikephoros I. Support for the patriarch of Constantinople—and especially for his principled policy of accommodation (οἰκονομία) must also characterize the group behind the *Chronographia* project.

1.4   *Rebels for Justice: Arsaber and His Allies*

Under the entry for Nikephoros' fifth year (AM 6299 or AD 806/7) the *Chronographia* records an attempted revolt by the imperial *tagmata* based in Thrace at Adrianople.

> When [Nikephoros] had come to Adrianople, he became aware that a revolt against him was being planned by imperial officials and by the *tagmata* and so he returned empty-handed, having achieved nothing except vengeance on his fellow-countrymen, many of whom he punished by scourging, exile, and confiscation.[20]

I pointed out in the previous chapter that this revolt must be read in conjunction with the attempted revolt suppressed in Nikephoros' sixth year (K. de Boor's AM 6300 or AD 807/8). This claim is based on the geographical proximity of the two rebel groups (Adrianople is 150 miles from Constantinople), the proximity of and lack of a significant division between the two passages in the unbroken narrative of *PG 1710*, and the verbal similarity between the punishments given to both intended rebel groups.

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19   MS 665 / dB 484 (AM 6301).
20   MS 664 / dB 483 (AM 6300).

In the month of February (AD 808) many officials planned a revolt against [Nikephoros I] and conferred their choice on the *quaestor* and *patrician* Arsaber, a pious and cultivated man. But when the resourceful [scheming] Nikephoros had been informed of this, he had [Arsaber] scourged and tonsured and—having made him a monk—exiled him to Bithynia; whilst the others he punished with lashes, banishment, and confiscation—not only secular dignitaries, but also holy bishops, and monks, and the clergy of the Great Church, including the *synkellos*, the *sakellarios*, and the *chartophylax*, men of high repute and worthy of respect.[21]

Read in conjunction, these passages thus associate the revolt led by the *quaestor* Arsaber and a *synkellos*—an obvious reference to the authorial persona of George[22]—other patriarchal officials, ecclesiastical hierarchs, monks, and imperial officials, with the thwarted revolt of the army just prior.

As *quaestor* of Constantinople Arsaber had a great deal of responsibility: as the second-highest figure in the judicial hierarchy, and thirty-fourth overall among all officials, he led the last court of appeals before the emperor's final judgment seat.[23] Arsaber must have been someone with some prominence and he almost certainly held a previous office that would have prepared him

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21   τῷ δὲ Φεβρουαρίῳ μηνὶ στάσιν ἐννοήσαντες κατ' αὐτοῦ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει Ἀρσαβήρ, τὸν κυαίστωρα καὶ πατρίκιον, ἄνδρα εὐσεβῆ καὶ λογιώτατον ἐψηφίζοντο. γνοὺς δὲ τοῦτο ὁ πολυμήχανος Νικηφόρος, αὐτὸν μὲν τύψας καὶ ἀποκείρας μοναχὸν πεποίηκεν, ἐν Βιθυνίᾳ τοῦτον ἐξορίσας, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς δαρμοῖς καὶ ἐξορίαις, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δημεύσεσι καθυπέβαλεν, οὐ μόνον τοὺς ἐν τῷ κοσμικῷ βίῳ ἄρχοντας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπισκόπους ἁγίους καὶ μοναχοὺς καὶ τοὺς τῆς μεγάλης ἐκκλησίας, τόν τε σύγκελλον καὶ τὸν σακελλάριον καὶ τὸν χαρτοφύλακα, ἄνδρας ἐλλογίμους ὑπάρχοντας καὶ αἰδοῦς ἀξίους. MS 664 / dB 483.23–484.2 (AM 6300).

22   Regardless of whether or not this *synkellos* of AD 808 is—in actual fact—associated with the historical person of George the Synkellos, the reader is invited to make this assumption. "Even if the *synkellos* who was so punished was not George, but his successor, the emperor's retribution fell on George's friends and colleagues in the patriarchal clergy." Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lviii.

23   Nicolas Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXᵉ et Xᵉ siècles: Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire*, Le monde byzantine (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1972), 101.35. Chapter 2 (section 4) discussed a surviving early ninth-century seal from Arsaber the *quaestor* (*PmbZ* no. 1735): Vitalien Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'Empire byzantin*, vol. 2, *L'administration centrale* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1981), no. 1100. Both *PmbZ* and Laurent accept the identification of the historical Arsaber of this seal with the usurper of the *Chronicle* (dB 483,25). See the comment under *PmbZ* no. 600.

for the position of *quaestor*.[24] We can flesh out the group aligned with Arsaber by pursuing what can be recovered about this historical individual.[25]

One such individual is known through a series of four surviving late eighth-century seals. The four seals in question were sent by a *patrikios* Arsaber, the *strategos* (governor-general) of Thrace.[26] It is probable that these

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24   There are two prominent individuals named Arsaber who are known to have flourished in the mid-ninth century whom I do not seriously consider here. For the chronology of Arsaber the *quaestor* to also be these persons, he would have had to be a very young man at the beginning of his career in 808. Someone who was also flourishing in the 840s is highly unlikely to have also been the *quaestor* of Constantinople who revolted in 808. One such Arsaber (*PmbZ* no. 601) was likely a relative of the eventual patriarch Photios. This Arsaber attached himself to the imperial family of emperor Theophilos by marrying Kalomaria, sister of the Empress Theodora. This same Arsaber was, as a result, awarded the dignity of *magistros*. The Arsaber of *PmbZ* no. 601 can perhaps be also identified with the Arsabers of *PmbZ* no. 609–11 (but see doubts about this under *PmbZ* no. 609). The Arsaber of *PmbZ* no. 602 was the brother of the *synkellos* and eventual patriarch of Constantinople John Grammatikos. This Arsaber likely was dignified as *patrikios* and received a Bosporos estate "*en to steno*" from the emperor Theophilos at the promotion of his brother John. Mark W. Herlong conflated these two in asserting that Arsaber the brother of John VII Grammatikos was the husband of Kalomaria. Mark W. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium: 717–959" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1986), 354. Herlong was followed by the translation of the *History* of Skylitzes in John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 87n23; 98n70; 99n71. But the *PmbZ* is surely correct in asserting the figures' distinction. See: *PmbZ* no. 601 Arsaber; no. 602 Arsaber; no. 4738 Kalomaria.

25   For the period of ca. 750–850, the *PmbZ* identifies a maximum of eighteen distinct historical figures with this name who are known. The majority of these figures are known from inscriptions on lead seals which officials in the Byzantine empire used to certify documents and letters sent to one another from approximately the sixth century, but especially from the seventh century on. The way the *PmbZ* uses these seals for prosopography is relevant to my argument. Unless there is absolute certainty that figures known from literary texts are the figures known from these seals, the *PmbZ* does not identify them as such, but enters them as distinct individuals and rightly leaves to scholars the decision on whether the "Arsaber" of a seal is the "Arsaber" of a text. As a result, it is entirely possible that many of the eighteen "Arsabers" in the PmbZ are in fact the same person. The appearance of these seals is essentially coterminous with the development of the administrative system of "Themes", tying their use to the major change in bureaucratic practice that the development of this "*Thema* system" occasioned. Seals were struck as coins, on both sides, with the obverse usually having an invocative prayer (with or without an image) and the reverse having the name and office of the relevant official.

26   The *strategos* of the "*Thrakesianoi*," that is thematic army of Thrace (*PmbZ* no. 595 Arsaber), left four seals. Three are discussed in *ZV* = v.1:1 nos. 751–753 with an updated reading at *Catalogue* (Oik) = v. III, 1.2 (p. 1). DO 55.1.1937. The latter is available online at: https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1955.1.1937. A fourth seal held at the Hermitage (M-1751) is discussed in Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und*

late eighth-century seals of Arsaber the *strategos* represent the early career of the same Arsaber who would later become *quaestor*. If so Arsaber the *strategos* likely attained his position as *quaestor* of Constantinople through his success in the military administration. This hypothesized career trajectory for our Arsaber coincides with the proposal (just above) that the *tagmata* revolt in Thracian Adrianople in AD 806/7 is part of the same revolt as the officials in Constantinople in AD 807/8. If as the *Chronicle* implies this Arsaber was the leader of this single revolt, it is quite likely he would have drawn upon his connections to the military officers in Thrace for support and to coordinate a consensus around his attempted usurpation.

Furthermore, if we are correct in identifying Arsaber the early ninth-century *quaestor* with Arsaber the late eighth-century *strategos*, then we can develop our portrait a bit further. Peter Charanis has argued that—parallel to the better-studied Skleros family—this Arsaber the *strategos* should be understood as a member of a prominent Armenian family brought to the capital to serve in the military administration, likely under Constantine V.[27] If we assume this connection we can make the following hypothesis: Arsaber the *patrikios* and *strategos* left a series of seals from the late eighth century from a successful career in the military administration of Thrace. This same Arsaber, at some point near the turn of the ninth-century, achieved the position of *quaestor* of Constantinople, possibly from the empress Irene.

I have already made a prosopographical connection between Arsaber the *quaestor* and the associates of Bardanes Tourkos implied by the *Chronicle*'s account of Bardanes' revolt. The *Chronicle* made Bardanes' reason for revolt

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Ämerstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert: Faktoren und Tendenzen ihrer Entwicklung, BBA 53 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 82. Winkelman identifies this figure as being the same who produced the single seal (*ZV* no. 1736) of a *patrikios* and *strategos* (personified as *PmbZ* no. 599 Arsaber). That is, Arsaber's rank as *strategos* was augmented by the fact that he had also acquired the senatorial dignity of *patrikios*. Note that even with all of Arsaber's dignities, a *quaestor* with the rank of *patrikios* was still far below a *synkellos*. For instance, according to the mid-ninth-century *Uspenskij Taktikon*, a *synkellos* would not have benefitted in rank by also being a senator (*patrikios*). When historical *synkelloi*—such as Euthymios—were made *patrikios* it was likely in order to explicitly signal the *synkellos*' ties to the imperial hierarchy.

27   Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium During the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, BBOS 13 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 64–65. And see: Peter Charanis, "The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantinoslavica* 22 (1961): 222–23. Arsaber is discussed as perhaps being the head of a prominent Armenian family brought to the capital in the military administration to function as the *strategos* of Thrace. If this happened in the late eighth century it would most likely have been under Constantine V. In making these statements I take *PmbZ* no. 595 Arsaber and *PmbZ* no. 599 Arsaber to be the same historic individual.

against Nikephoros I not only the injustices committed against Irene, but Nikephoros' first official act of creating the new court of justice at the imperial palace of the Magnaura.[28] Besides the *Chronicle*'s rhetorical framing of this event as evidence that Nikephoros was the form of greed and the antithesis of mercy, the substance of his action was to take over direct control of all judicial appeals brought to the city of Constantinople by bringing them behind the *Chalke* gate. By removing the customary first stage in the process of appeals, Nikephoros' act took away the authority of the *quaestor* and brought the topography of justice entirely within the confines of the imperial palace complex.[29] One can imagine that a contemporary reader aware of the political figures involved would have known that this meant Arsaber would have worked his way up through the military administration to be governor-general (*strategos*) of Thrace and then *quaestor* of Constantinople only to see the new emperor eliminate the meaning of his office. One of Bardanes' causes may have been to restore Arsaber's authority.

By beginning its invective against Nikephoros I with this affront to the *quaestor*, the *Chronicle* also set up its later account of the *quaestor*'s revolt to be a revolt on behalf of benevolence, justice, and mercy. The *Chronicle*'s rhetoric makes this explicit, stating the emperor pretended the new court would eradicate injustice but instead he established injustice; he pretended to help the poor (πτωχοί) but in truth he only wanted "to dishonor and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything." This language set up anyone opposing Nikephoros' action (such as a dispossessed *quaestor*) as an actor against greed and a supporter of justice for the poor, and so prepared a contemporary audience—who knew who Arsaber was and what his office of

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28   "So when this Devourer of All (ὁ παμφάγος) had seized power, he was unable even for a short time to hide by means of dissimulation his innate wickedness and avarice (κακία καὶ φιλαργυρία); nay, pretending to be about to eradicate injustice he set up that evil and unjust tribunal at the Magnaura ... not to give the poor (πτωχοί) their due, but by this means to dishonour and subjugate all persons in authority and to gain personal control of everything, which, indeed, he did." ὁ γοῦν παμφάγος οὗτος τοῦ κράτους ἐπιλαβόμενος οὐδὲ κἂν πρὸς βραχὺ ἴσχυσεν ἐπικαλύψαι δι' ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἔμφυτον αὐτοῦ κακίαν τε καὶ φιλαργυρίαν· ἀλλ' ὡς δῆθεν τὴν ἀδικίαν μέλλων ἐκκόπτειν τὸ πονηρὸν ἐν τῇ Μαγναύρᾳ καὶ ἄδικον συνεστήσατο δικαστήριον.... οὐ τοῖς πτωχοῖς τὰ δίκαια ἀποδιδόναι ... ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτου πάντας τοὺς ἐν τέλει ἀτιμάσαι τε καὶ αἰχμαλωτίσαι, καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα μετενεγκεῖν· ὃ καὶ πεποίηκεν. MS 657 / dB 478–9 (AM 6295). Slightly adapted.

29   The *Chronographia*'s rhetorically significant placement of this as Nikephoros' first and character-defining act should be read in conjunction with A. Christophilopoulou's point that from a historical perspective this act must be taken in the context of Nikephoros' other reforms. Aikaterina Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History II: 610–867*, trans. Timothy Cullen, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1993), 202.

quaestor meant—to read the entry on the revolt of 808 favorably and in doing so also associate his revolt with the earlier revolt of Bardanes.

Intriguingly, Arsaber's associations with the revolt of Bardanes Tourkos at the beginning of the reign of Nikephoros I also connects him to a close-knit circle of military men around Leo V. J. Signes Codoñer has identified the Armenian factions supporting Leo V with the largely Armenian group who had served under Bardanes Tourkos in Anatolia in the late eighth century.[30] This group had first been given favorable positions by Michael I Rhangabe (r. 811–813), but would go on to include the emperors to succeed him: both Leo V (r. 813–820), and after him Michael II "the Amorian" (r. 820–829). The group was not only connected by serving together in the military, but through intermarriage: Michael II (for instance) had married Thekla, the daughter of Bardanes Tourkos.[31] To be clear: any reader post-813 would have known that the revolt of 808 had not, as it turns out, ended in failure. Arsaber's family was clearly important within the group of early ninth-century Constantinopolitans who backed the rise of Leo V. A Constantinopolitan audience reading the *Chronographia* after AD 813 would have known that Arsaber and his family were at that moment more important and influential than they ever had been before.

Our knowledge of the later career of Arsaber provides us with further information about his complex place within the socio-political network of Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820). Arsaber's revolt may have failed in AD 808, but just a few years later his family was embedded in the chambers of imperial power. These positions of power came with consequences for the family. The history of Theophanes Continuatus and Genesios' mid-tenth-century *On the Reigns of Emperors* records that Arsaber was the father of empress Theodosia, Leo V's wife.[32] We are also told something about another of Arsaber's children,

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30   Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 65 defines this group as a "hetaireia" to mean "a common sense of belonging to the same group." This usage was rejected outright in a recent review, though on scanty and unjustified grounds: Warren T. Treadgold, "Review: The Emperor Theophilos and the East," *Mediaevistik* 28 (2015): 500–501. I largely follow Signes Codoñer in connecting the dots between various alliances and persons whom he connects under this "Armenian Family Network" in chapters 3 and 7 of his work.

31   Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 65.

32   Theodosia = *PmbZ* no. 7790. Theodosia is mentioned in these histories in the following manner. Michael the Amorian (eventually emperor from 820–829) had been undermining Leo V with threats of deposition and the empress Theodosia with accusations of "unlawful sexual unions." On 24 December 820 Michael's designs were brought to light. He was "convicted of high treason" and was to be taken to the palace baths to be burnt in the furnace. "After the Imperial order was given, the emperor was eager to witness its execution. But his wife the Empress Theodosia—the daughter of the *patrikios* and

Theophanes (not the chronicler). Theophanes the son of Arsaber had attained the rank of *spatharios* under Leo V and, according to the *Life* of Patriarch Nikephoros I, Arsaber's son was attempting to persuade the patriarch to engage in a debate with Leo V over the use of icons in worship.[33]According to that *Life* this Theophanes the *spatharios* helped Leo V pressure the patriarch Nikephoros I to support the emperor's return to the iconoclast policies of the Isaurians Leo III and Constantine V. It is therefore essential to be clear, here, that having a family stake in imperial politics did not necessitate lining up *as a family* on one side or the other in specific debates over icons. While Arsaber's daughter the empress Theodosia had attempted to persuade Leo V to *not* adopt an iconoclast policy, his son Theophanes helped the emperor enforce his iconoclast policy on the patriarch. Ninth-century political reality does not line up neatly with the simplistic iconoclast vs. iconophile division often imposed on this period.

In the rhetoric of the *Chronographia* project a community which included the patriarch Nikephoros, the rebel Bardanes Tourkos, the *quaestor* Arsaber, and the future emperor Leo V were all associated with support for the policies of empress Irene. They now seem to also have been a part of the same socio-political network, a community which was either directly behind the *Chronographia* project or else it was this network for whom it was written. This community was largely pro-icon, but that stance was complicated, for the text emphatically sided with the patriarch Nikephoros against the monastic community of St. John in Stoudios, and we have just found that the *spatharios* Theophanes (son of Arsaber) actually helped Leo V renew iconoclast policies in the capital. We can also more positively define the wider audience for the

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quaestor Arsaber—rushed out without carefully considering the consequences and confronted her husband." Genesios, *On the Reigns of Emperors* 1.18. Ed. Anthony Kaldellis, *Genesios on the Reigns of the Emperors*, BYZAUS 11 (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998), 20. In Genesios' anecdote Theodosia was protesting the imprisonment and planned execution of one Michael, who would go on to become emperor (r. 820–829) later that year and found the Amorian dynasty. See: Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronography* 1.22. Ed. [Jeffrey] Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, CFHB 53 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 35.7. Following these texts, John Skylitzes makes a similar comment about the same event: "As they made their way to the bathhouse, the empress Theodosia (Arsaber's daughter) heard what was going to take place." Translated by Wortley, *John Skylitzes*, 22 with n23.

33   See: Elizabeth A. Fisher, "Life of the Patriarch Nikephoros I of Constantinople," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saint's Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, BSLT 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 106n339, 108.

project without reference to icons at all: this was not only a group of elites that supported Irenic fiscal policies, but were participants and/or sympathizers with Arsaber's revolt against Nikephoros I, and with Bardanes' (earlier) revolt recorded under the first year of Nikephoros I's reign (K. de Boor's AM 6295 and our 803).

All of this contributes to our understanding of the diversity of the networks, opinions, and debates in the "inter-iconoclast" period. When the *Chronographia* was first begun in 808 no one knew that Leo the Armenian would rise to the throne and become Leo V in 813. No one knew that with Leo's rise the legacies of the failed revolts of Bardanes Tourkos and Arsaber the *quaestor* would be exonerated by Arsaber's daughter Theodosia becoming empress, or Bardanes' daughter Thekla becoming Michael II's empress. Nor would anyone have known that in AD 815 iconoclasm would make a comeback. Instead, the original impetus of the work was to frame the network behind the *Chronographia* as righteous rebels, and through a clever, subtle, and damning portrait of the iconophile emperor Nikephoros I as the Devourer of All, to justify their opposition to him. That this vitriol focused on an "orthodox" emperor underscores how important it is to remember that the political discourse of the time had plenty of room for debate without reference to iconoclasm. However, this situation changed utterly and completely in the years after AD 810. Those changes in the political climate of Constantinople are what explains the change in rhetoric and argument for the final three entries of the *Chronicle*, AM 6303–AM 6305.

2   Who Was for Leo V? The Entries for AM 6303–6305

The entries which cover AM 6303–AM 6305 or AD 811–813 are the final three entries of the *Chronographia* as it survives to the present. They tell of the death of Nikephoros, the short reign of Michael I, and then the very last entry (AM 6305 or AD 813) brings Leo V to the throne. These entries must be read with an eye to the socio-political context just uncovered. In this section I connect the rhetoric of these passages with the interests of the groups just defined—specifically of Arsaber the former *quaestor*—and in doing so uncover what the *Chronographia* might have meant in the context of the 815 council called by Leo V (r. 813–820).

To review, the end achieved by the argument of the *Chronographia* up through AM 6302 was to put those who had stood against the emperor Nikephoros I on the right side of God's providence (οἰκονομία). However,

three events over the course of the subsequent four years 811–814 rendered that opposition to and invective against Nikephoros I—and thereby the entire focus of the *Chronographia* project through AM 6302 (AD 810)—misdirected and obsolete.

First, Nikephoros died.[34] In 811 the emperor finally embarked on the campaign against the Bulgars which had been delayed by the rebellions of 807–809. After initially driving deep into Bulgarian territory the emperor was trapped and slaughtered, his disembodied skull turned into a silver-lined drinking goblet for the Bulgar ruler Krum. The carefully shaded and allusive AM 6302 entry, which so artfully crafted a lesson for Constantinople out of Nikephoros' reign in implicit let-the-reader-understand rhetoric, was rendered superfluous in the obvious black-and-white conclusion to be drawn from the emperor's death: God had destroyed the evil Nikephoros. An impending Antichrist is cause for worry; a present Antichrist is cause for revolt; but a dead Antichrist is no Antichrist at all. The first end of the *Chronographia* had vanished. The final First-Created Day was yet to come.

Second, Leo V "the Armenian" (r. 813–820) came to power, and his wife—the daughter of Arsaber—suddenly became the empress Theodosia.[35] With the accession of Leo V the associates and family of Arsaber, for whom the first end of the *Chronographia* was a careful piece of propaganda, went from dispossessed and banished rebels to occupants of the imperial palace. Controlling the legacy of the murdered Nikephoros I and his powerless son Staurakios surely still had some value, but spending the intellectual, cultural, and political capital of the *Chronographia* on such an end was an unjustifiable expense. Instead, what the supporters of Arsaber and the devotees of the legacy of Irene now needed was an explanation for why Leo V was in power, and a map for the divinely sanctioned order and unity of the Roman Empire of which they were now at the helm.

Third, iconoclasm made a comeback. This comeback threatened to split the newly ascendant faction before they had even settled into power. In AD 814 Leo V called a council to reconsider iconoclasm.[36] The council amounted to a loyalty test to reveal who would publicly oppose the emperor's iconoclasm. Leo V had his team of intellectuals—including the young and brilliant John Grammatikos—ready to deal with any challengers. Intriguingly, opposition

34   Pavlos E. Niavis, *The Reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus I. (AD 802–811) = Hē Basileia tou Byzantinou Autokratora Nikēphorou 1 (802–811 m. Ch.)*, Historikes Monographies 3 (Athens: Basilopoulos, 1987). Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 357–65.

35   Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 13–32.

36   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 366–85.

to the emperor's position would center on patriarch Nikephoros I, identified above as a key ally of the group behind the *Chronographia.*

Leo V's iconoclasm split Arsaber's coalition, even as he had brought them into the palace. It must have been maddening for these iconophile supporters of Leo V to try to sort out what to do with their *Chronographia* in 814. The *Chronographia*'s attack on Nikephoros could still explain why Leo V needed to *come* to the throne, but it could not justify why—having decided for iconoclasm—Leo should *stay* on the throne. The work's explicit opposition to iconoclasm meant it could not possibly fulfill its intended destiny as the historical justification for Leo V's reign. And we find this very tension expressed in the changed rhetoric of the final entries, the new ending which reconfigured the contours of the past to bring it into line with this new era.

It is important to note that the prevailing scholarly consensus still holds that this third event is irrelevant because the *Chronographia* project was completed in AD 813, the date of the final entry. The idea that the chronographer put down his pen in that year is based on two points. First, AD 813 is the last year the *Chronicle* described. Second, it is assumed to be impossible for our iconophile author to have written that Leo V was "pious" (as under AD 813) while knowing that in 814 Leo V would convene a council to restore iconoclasm. In contradistinction, my analysis below finds that the final three entries (AM 6303–6305) make little sense *unless* author and audience know Leo V had reinstated iconoclasm. I make my case for 815 (or just after) as the date of completion by starting with the uncontroversial premise that the impetus which had driven George the Synkellos' project to AM 6302 (AD 810)—to compose a historical invective against the emperor Nikephoros I—was no longer relevant by the time the final three entries were composed. Given this premise, I then argue that the final three entries of the *Chronicle* were added to re-direct the entire political ethic of the project towards staking out a position for a pro-icon faction within the supporters of the iconoclast Leo V. This second purpose, or end, is the impetus for the updated ending of the *Chronographia.*

2.1 *The New Narrative Voice from* AM 6303

The language of the *Chronicle* itself gives us evidence that AM 6303 began a second ending, written by a new author. The previous chapters have already argued for a narrative break at AM 6302. In addition to those arguments, a unique first-person statement in AM 6303 directly signals a new authorial voice. In an anecdote concerning Nikephoros' self-regard the author reveals his source by stating "these things—God knows—I, myself, the compiler,

heard *viva voce* from Theodosios."[37] Up through AM 6302 the authorial persona related first-person anecdotes with the phrase "αὐτὸς ἐγώ" (I, myself). However, the additional identifier "the compiler" (ὁ συγγραφόμενος) is new.[38] Tellingly, this participial noun (ὁ συγγραφόμενος) is the same used to describe the authorship of the *Chronographia* in the *Preface*.[39] While that possibility could be pursued further, the important conclusion here is simply that this is a different authorial persona in AM 6303.

There is also a narrative reason to see AM 6302 composed before AM 6303 (AD 811). As noted, in that year the emperor led his armies into a military disaster against the Bulgarians. Not only would Nikephoros lose his life but his decapitated skull was made into a silver-plated drinking goblet for the victorious Krum.[40] It is characteristic of the *Chronographia* to forecast the consequences of emperors' sins long before they happen. All four of the previous emperors are subjected to this treatment: Leo III, Constantine V, Irene, and Constantine VI.[41] Nevertheless, the *Chronographia* is silent about Nikephoros'

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37   ταῦτα, κύριος οἶδεν, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ζώσῃ φωνῇ ὁ συγγραφόμενος ἀκήκοα παρὰ Θεοδοσίου. MS 673 / dB 490 (AM 6303). Nikephoros had told the story to his "faithful servant" Theodosios Salibaras. It should be noted that there has been some discussion of this passage in relation to the question of authorship (see MS 676n11). Part of this centers around the question of the date, which in the context of the entry would seem to place the conversation in June of AD 811, just before Theodosios Salibaras accompanied Nikephoros on his fateful campaign against the Bulgars. However, if this entry was the first written by a new author, perhaps that author got this anecdote from Theodosios at a different time but decided to place it into this context, as appropriate and explanatory of Nikephoros' mindset.

38   Note the author as a child playing on icebergs in the Bosporos at MS 600–601 / dB 434 (AM 6255), or kissing the relics of St. Euphemia—narrated under AM 6258 / AD 765/6 at MS 607–608 / dB 439–40, occurring in AM 6288 / AD 796.

39   The participle (from the Thucydidean verb συγγραφέω for the writing of history) is used both of George the Synkellos and Theophanes. The author who completed the last three entries is also likely the author of the *Preface* (whether or not this is actually the historical Theophanes the Confessor). See: Andrzej Kompa, "Gnesioi Filoi: The Search for George Syncellus' and Theophanes the Confessor's Own Words, and the Authorship of Their Oeuvre," *Studia Ceranea* 5 (2015): 155–230; and Andrzej Kompa, "In search of Syncellus' and Theophanes' own words: the authorship of the Chronographia revisited," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 73–92. Given my proposal for the identification of George the Synkellos with the σύγκελλος of AM 6300, George would have been living in exile in AM 6303, and it is more likely that another person was the one to have the reported intimate conversation with Nikephoros' close confidant.

40   MS 673–74 / dB 491 (AM 6303).

41   In addition, consider that Nikephoros' death *is* forecast from within AM 6303: Nikephoros is "he whom God was to slay." MS 672 / dB 489 (AM 6303). Some obvious examples of the regular pattern of forecasting the deaths of emperors: Leo III and Constantine V: MS 572–3 / dB 413 (AM 6232); Irene: MS 637 / dB 463 (AM 6281); Constantine VI: MS 643 / dB 468 (AM 6284). To give the context: Leo III had his adoption of the heresy of iconoclasm—his "fury against the correct faith"—prophesied by the patriarch Germanos under AM 6221

demise until the entry in which it happened, despite the fact that Nikephoros was the most reviled figure in the entire *Chronographia*.[42] It is difficult to imagine the chronographer missing an opportunity to also incorporate Nikephoros' ultimate fate into the descriptions of his sins, discussed in detail in chapter 7. The most likely explanation is that the opportunity was not there because the chronographer was writing this entry in AM 6302 (AD 810) without knowledge of the next year's events.

Further evidence for a new author lies in the thematic changes between the entries for AM 6302 and AM 6303. Some earlier themes are altered, while new ideas are introduced. First, the indirect way in which Nikephoros' "greed" (πλεονεξία) needed to be drawn out of the language of AM 6295–AM 6302 is cast aside in favor of explicit statements about that key vice. In addition, passages where greed is explicit carry a slightly diferent meaning than the conclusion to Nikephoros' Ten Evils. There it was stated that "these few actions out of many—inscribed by me as though in summary—signify the inventiveness of this man in every form of πλεονεξία."[43] Here and in the entries leading up to this point a better way of rending πλεονεξία would be as "extortion," the kind of greed that can be exerted only by a person with power.[44] However, in AM 6303 it is repeated more often, signifies a more general idea of greed, and instead of being the entire focus of the invective against Nikephoros becomes only one of several aspects of his evil.[45]

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at MS 564 / dB 408. That Constantine V would become a "subverter of our ancestral customs" was forecast from his very baptism under the reign of his father in MS 575 / dB 414 (AM 6233). Constantine VI's death was predicted early on and even done so with exactly the same phrase as Nikephoros' death in AM 6303. The prophecy indicates Constantine VI was blinded as punishment for his own unjust blinding of the patrician and *strategos* Alexios (whom Constantine suspected of harboring an intention to revolt). "But not for long did God's judgment leave this unjust deed unavenged: for after a lapse of five years, in the same month and also on a Saturday the same Constantine was blinded by his own mother." MS 643 / dB 468 (AM 6284).

42   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lvi: "The emperor Nikephoros I is presented as a monster of iniquity without a single redeeming feature.... No other emperor in the whole Chronicle, with the possible exception of the iconoclast Constantine V, is painted in such black colours."

43   Ταῦτα ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ μικρά μοι ἐστηλογράφηται δηλοῦντι τὸ πρὸς πᾶν εἶδος πλεονεξίας αὐτοῦ πολυμήχανον. dB 487.19–21 (AM 6302). Translation mine. C. Mango and R. Scott's version is: "I have made a succinct and brief record of these actions—and they are but a small part—in order to indicate this man's inventiveness in all manner of greed." MS 668.

44   For reference, Mango and Scott consistently translate πλεονεξία as "greed" throughout the *Chronicle*.

45   In a similar manner Nikephoros' creation of the tribunal at the Magnaura was a subtle but key justification of the revolt of the *quaestor* (the chief of the court of appeals) Arsaber. Under AM 6303, the new tribunal is simply dropped into a catalogue of sins to construct

Additionally, after AM 6302 Nikephoros' epithet of "All-Devourer" disappears. New typologies take its place and they make much freer use of comparisons which muddy the subtlety of the image of Nikephoros as the new Pharaoh.[46] From this point Nikephoros even framed himself in the image of the Old Testament king most renowned for being an enemy of God and God's servants, the king of Israel Ahab.[47] In the entry for AM 6303 Nikephoros is still also the new Pharaoh, but where the ten vexations of AM 6302 had generated an implied pharaonic typology, in AM 6303 Nikephoros is suddenly not only explicitly compared to Pharaoh, but he makes the comparison himself: "'If God has hardened my heart as He hardened Pharaoh's, what good can come to my

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the argument that Nikephoros sought to turn Christians against one another. Nikephoros' extortionate greed as the "All-Devourer" was the one dominant idea book-ending the reign of Nikephoros from AM 6295–6302. Referenced explicitly in AM 6303 at MS 672 / dB 489.22 and MS 674 / dB 491.29–30 and in AM 6304 at MS 677 / dB 493.35, "extortion" and greed are emphasized by noting that when Nikephoros invaded Bulgaria, he did not do so in order to achieve a victory for the empire but in order to acquire wealth, being "mindful only of the collection of spoils." MS 673 / dB 490.23–24 (AM 6303). Having raided Kroummos' treasury Nikephoros refused to share, ordering that "any Christians who laid hands on the spoils had their ears or other parts of the body amputated." MS 673 / dB 490.25–26 (AM 6303). Nikephoros had the opportunity to flee with what he could bear, but even this was not enough and allowed the Bulgars to entrap the emperor even after they had been defeated.

46 Nikephoros used the consolidation of power to limit the avenues for subjects to object to his abuses. This is what made Nikephoros like Judas the Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. Judas, placed in charge of the disciples' money and possessions, made the argument that this should be "made public property." Sounding generous, in practice this made the properties the possessions of the one who held them for the public—whether Nikephoros or Judas. The verb is κοινάω. See: John 12:3–5 and dB 489.12–13 (MS 672).

47 When Nikephoros embarked on his doomed campaign he meditated on the words Ahab had muttered about his helplessness: both God and the devil draw him against his will. The emperor marched against the Bulgars "frequently repeating these words: 'Who will go and deceive Ahab?'" found at 1 Kings 22:23. MS 672–73 / dB 490.12–14 (AM 6303). In this scriptural reference God desires a spirit of prophecy who will descend on all of the prophets not to proclaim the truth of Ahab's impending demise, but to convince Ahab that he will have victory and so seal his death on the battlefield. 1 Kings 22:20–22. This moment occurs at the end of Ahab's reign when the king, like Nikephoros, was about to embark on a military campaign. Ahab desired prophets to tell him the outcome of his venture, and all the prophets proclaimed that his battle would be successful. Ahab, however, demanded that the one prophet whom he believed always spoke the truth to him—though it was never good—be summoned, one Micaiah. Micaiah at first prophesied success but when Ahab demanded the truth, Micaiah had another vision in which God in heaven asked for a prophet willing to "entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead." Ironically, Ahab then rejected Micaiah's minority report, embarked on the campaign, and so met his fate. Nikephoros here fulfilled the type of Ahab, enticed by prophets into the will of God that the evil king be deceived and so enticed to march to his own death.

subjects?'"[48] The entry for AM 6302 had impelled its readers to think about Nikephoros as Pharaoh without directly announcing this connection. Whether this was done to display literary skill, to avoid an accusation of slander, or both, it is a shift to both announce the connection directly and to make Nikephoros self-incriminate.

Finally, AM 6303 is replete with simple pejoratives in a manner unlike any other portion of the *Chronographia*. Nikephoros is "ungodly"[49] and a sympathizer with heretics: an "ardent friend" to the Paulicians (called "Manichees") and a defender of those who "blasphemed against the true religion and the holy icons."[50] He incites "military officers to treat bishops and clergy-men like slaves,"[51] levels "unjust confiscations and fines,"[52] and "greatly encouraged mutual hostility and railed at every Christian who loved his neighbor."[53] Nikephoros is an atheist who "denied Providence (πρόνοια)"[54] and plotted evil.[55] He is subject to homophobic slurs[56] and marked by God for death.[57] Everything that Nikephoros does is subject to hyperbole: planning "a thousand other evil intentions" on his failed campaign he lost "an infinite number of soldiers so that the flower of Christendom was destroyed." As the entry closes, the author begs the reader to accept Nikephoros as the height of evil against Christians: "At no time did Christians have the misfortune of experiencing a rule more grievous than his. He surpassed all his predecessors by his greed, his licentiousness, his barbaric cruelty." All of the subtlety discovered in the text for the AM 6302 entry was abandoned in AM 6303.

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48   MS 672 / dB 489.32–490.2 (AM 6303). The discussions (see MS 676n11) that have assured us that the chronographer is lying and that these words could never have been spoken by Nikephoros have not only failed to imagine both the many contexts in which humans might utter surprising phrases and the many contexts into which others are willing to re-contextualize those remarks. They have also failed to address the rhetorical point of these self-incriminating typologies. Making Nikephoros self-aware of himself as an enemy of God connects him to the portrait of Constantine V in the *Chronicle*. See for instance Constantine V's attempt to placate the mother of God at his own death in MS 619 / dB 448 (AM 6267).

49   MS 671 / dB 488 (AM 6303).

50   MS 671 / dB 488–89 (AM 6303).

51   MS 672 / dB 489 (AM 6303).

52   MS 671 / dB 488 (AM 6303).

53   MS 671 / dB 489 (AM 6303).

54   MS 672 / dB 489.14 (AM 6303).

55   "Confounded in his imaginations" and "by his own evil designs." MS 672 / dB 489 and 490 (AM 6303).

56   "As for his effeminate servants with whom he went to bed." MS 674 / dB 491 (AM 6303).

57   As described for Ahab in note 53 and in the prediction this was "he whom God was to slay." MS 672 / dB 489 (AM 6303).

There is one detail in the entry for AM 6301 (AD 808/9) that seems to counter my proposal that the author of that entry did not know of events after AM 6302. Under AM 6301, internal strife at the death of Harun al-Rashid spilled over into Syria during the succession crisis and a persecution arose against Christians in Syria that "lasted five years" (i.e., to AM 6305).[58] However, that phrase projecting the duration of the persecution could easily have been added retrospectively by the author for AM 6305.[59] In fact, exact parallels in the descriptions of the destruction in both AM 6305 and AM 6301 point to the author of the latter having copied the former. This sort of repetition might be expected from a secondary, supplementary author.[60] Finally, the list of sites indicates that the author of the passage in AM 6301 had their own perspective on the relative hierarchy of Palestinian monastic centers (according with the persona of George the Synkellos),[61] whereas the author of AM 6305 seems to be familiar with the spiritual topography of Jerusalem in only a second-hand manner.[62]

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58   "The inhabitants of Syria, Egypt, and Libya were divided into different principalities and destroyed the common good as well as one another.... The slaughter resulting from this anarchy, directed at each other and against us, lasted five years." οἱ κατὰ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ Αἴγυπτον καὶ Λιβύην εἰς διαφόρους κατατμηθέντες ἀρχὰς τά τε δημόσια πράγματα καὶ ἀλλήλους κατέστρεψαν, ... ἐπεκράτησε δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀναρχίας ἡ κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἡμῶν μιαιφονία ἔτη ε′. MS 665 / dB 484 (AM 6301).

59   The alterations, which would only have involved changing the tense of the verb from present to past and adding "for five years" (ἔτη ε′), occupy the space of only two letters in the shorthand of the manuscript. Proposed original text in AM 6301 (*with differences indicated by boldface*): ἐπικρατ[εῖ] δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀναρχίας ἡ κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἡμῶν μιαιφονία; "The slaughter resulting from this anarchy, directed at each other and against us, [holds sway]." Compared to the current text of the *Chronographia*: ἐπεκράτ[ησε] δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀναρχίας ἡ κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἡμῶν μιαιφονία [ἔτη ε′]; "The slaughter resulting from this anarchy, directed at each other and against us, [lasted five years]."

60   Such as: "were made desolate" and "holy city of Christ our God." MS 683 / dB 499 (AM 6305); cf. MS 665 / dB 484 (AM 6305).

61   "The monasteries of the two great *lavras*, namely that of Sts. Chariton and Kyriakos and that of St. Sabas and the other *koinobia*, namely those of St. Euthymios and St. Theodosios." τά τε μοναστήρια τῶν δύο μεγάλων λαυρῶν, τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις Χαρίτωνος καὶ Κυριακοῦ, καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Σάβα, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ κοινόβια τῶν ἁγίων Εὐθυμίου καὶ Θεοδοσίου. MS 665 / dB 484 (AM 6301). The specific monasteries that were affected are noticed and there is a marked preference for the *lavra* (a collection of hermits) of St. Chariton over St. Sabas. This is consistent with a statement by George Synkellos earlier in the *Chronographia* (AT 152–53 / M 122). A further point: in AM 6301 the first-person pronoun is used to associate the author directly with the suffering monks residing in the Holy Land also points to George the Synkellos. However, in AM 6305 the first-person pronoun, so distinctive of the rest of the *Chronographia* when discussing the "Syrians" of the Holy Land, is dropped. For a previous example see: AT 204 / M 165.

62   "In the same year many of the Christians of Palestine—monks and laymen and from all of Syria—arrived in Cyprus, fleeing the excessive misdeeds of the Arabs.... In the holy city of

In conclusion, there is ample evidence that the entry for AM 6303 introduces a new narrative unit. It begins by dethroning Nikephoros from his central role in the narrative by informing the reader that God had judged and slayed Nikephoros. Previously wary and oblique, the text turned from invective to diatribe. The resulting portrait of Nikephoros is damning but haphazard, with so many typologies evoked that the emperor is no longer the culmination of evil but an evil ruler like every other and none in particular. Nikephoros goes from being an Antichrist to be feared to an anecdote of God's just judgment. This new voice clears the way to see a new agenda from AM 6303.

In the next section, I will first describe how the entries for AM 6303–6305 wove a new definition of the reader into the narrative. From AM 6303 the reader became defined by the first-person plural collective of *we* Romans and *we* Christians who needed to be responsible for *our* sins. From this observation I will tease out the more subtle side of the new paradigm: what, exactly, was the sin that *we* were meant to be responsible for? The answer to this question is the dual purpose served by returning the narrative to the age of Constantine V. Not only did returning time to the age of Constantine V mean re-setting the progression of narrative types, but it meant a return to Constantine's specific sin: iconoclasm. The new ending to the *Chronographia* set up this revelation by re-framing Nikephoros I himself in the mold of the iconoclasts.

2.2 *"We Christians": The New Audience of AM 6303–6305*

Nikephoros' death presented a combination of problems for the *Chronicle*. This apocalyptic chronography had set up Nikephoros in the image of the Antichrist, but such an agenda ultimately undermined chronology itself. Since time was calculated by the reigns of kings, if the last ruler was dead, then time was up and there was no chronography.[63] Nikephoros' death also meant a narrative collapse. The Antichrist was to be the last earthly ruler and his demise should inaugurate the final First-Created Day. But since the rulers of Rome marched on with the reigns of Michael I and Leo V then so did

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Christ our God, the venerable places of the Holy Resurrection, of Golgotha, and the rest were profaned. Likewise, the famous *lavras* in the desert, that of St. Chariton and that of St. Sabas, and the other monasteries and churches were made desolate." τῷ δ' αὐτῷ ἔτει πολλοὶ τῶν κατὰ Παλαιστίνην Χριστιανῶν μοναχοὶ καὶ λαϊκοὶ καὶ ἐκ πάσης Συρίας τὴν Κύπρον κατέλαβον φεύγοντες τὴν ἄμετρον κάκωσιν τῶν Ἀράβων … οἵ τε κατὰ τὴν ἁγίαν Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν πόλιν σεβάσμιοι τόποι τῆς ἁγίας ἀναστάσεως, τοῦ κρανίου καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐβεβηλώθησαν. ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ αἱ κατὰ τὴν ἔρημον διαβόητοι λαῦραι τοῦ ἁγίου Χαρίτωνος καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Σάβα, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ μοναστήρια καὶ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι ἠρημώθησαν. MS 683 / dB 499 (AM 6301).

63   Jesse W. Torgerson, "Time and Again: Early Medieval Chronography and the Recurring Holy First-Created Day of George Synkellos," in *Time: Sense, Space, Structure*, Presenting the Past 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 18–57.

universal Roman time. Time had a different end. What new end, or purpose, would govern the new ending?

Extending the narrative of time meant resetting the succession of imperial types. And so, the *Chronographia*'s new ending provided a new end by returning to an earlier typological turning point. This point was the arrival of the *forerunner* to the Antichrist. The reasoning here is clever. If the present time was still the time of the forerunner, then the Antichrist was yet to come. Specifically, this return meant demonstrating that Rome was still in the age of Constantine v.[64] This new era then placed its redefined audience into a new moral crisis. Instead of the reader of AM 6302, a singular entity called upon to oppose the Antichrist in Nikephoros I, the new ending called upon a collective who would together take responsibility for the state of present affairs and prevent the rise of the Antichrist. The new end called upon its readers to take responsibility even as God was punishing us for "our sins."

The entry for AM 6303 immediately established its new reader as "Christians":

> In this year Nikephoros extended his designs against Christians ... to describe all of them in detail would appear tedious to those who seek to learn events in a succinct form.[65]

In the passage that follows, the listed evils are "designs against Christians" (τὰς κατὰ Χριστιανῶν ἐπινοίας). Nikephoros' actions are not merely directed against specific Christians (as in AM 6302) but against "every Christian" and "all Christians." The list begins with specifics but ends returning to the same noun, claiming Nikephoros also had "a thousand other evil designs" (καὶ ἄλλας μυρίας

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64   This is done both explicitly through the anecdote of the anti-resurrection of Constantine, but also implicitly through the return to the language that provided the rhetorical framing of Constantine v's reign, "our sins." See the very beginning of Constantine's reign at MS 575 / dB 414 (AM 6233): "In this year the subverter of our ancestral customs, Constantine, became emperor by God's judgment on account of the multitude of our sins." This term of things happening on account of *our* sins governs the rhetoric of (especially) AM 6305. But note that Constantine v is also "unrepentant like Pharaoh." MS 585 / dB 423 (AM 6238): "thus scourging ... the impious Constantine and restraining his fury against the Church and the holy icons, even though he remained unrepentant like Pharaoh of old." This lack of repentance characterizing a pharaonic typology shows up in AM 6303's updated portrait of Nikephoros I.

65   C. Mango and R. Scott's translation (above) would indicate that the rhetoric does this by using a definite article in the later entry (translating Χριστιανούς as "Christians" and κατὰ Χριστιανῶν as "against *the* Christians"), but this distinction is not present in the language of the manuscripts. Instead, the rhetorical shift is accomplished by the syntax of the sentences as a whole. In the earlier entry the text mentions the Christians in terms of one specific action against specific people (the deportation in MS 671 / dB 488 [AM 6302]).

κακῶν ἐπινοίας). In other words, Nikephoros' focus had subtly shifted from greedy "devouring" to a series of designs against this collective, the entire populace of the Romans (Christians). The beginning harangue against Nikephoros creates a discourse around the Christian collective, and then continues and even intensifies through the end of AM 6305.[66] This all establishes the new rhetorical context or plotline for these final entries.

This turn towards persistently setting the reader within a new collective makes the reader and his community responsible for the evils of the age. That responsibility is established in the opening sentences of AM 6303:

> As a result [of performing certain incantations] he [Nikephoros I] won a victory which God allowed because of the multitude of our sins.

Nikephoros' success is not due to his ability to bring victory but to God's permissiveness in order to punish "us" for "our sins." If Nikephoros' victories are a result of "*our* sins," then Christians as a whole are implicated in the emperor's deeds. The text combines these two points to impel the reader to a sense of responsibility. After narrating Nikephoros' decisions leading to the destruction of the Byzantine army at the court of Kroummos, the chronographer prays: "May not Christians experience another time the ugly events of that day for which no lamentation is adequate."[67] And, when the army had been destroyed, he concludes that "the beauty of the Christians was totally destroyed."[68] Nikephoros' actions were attacks against a Christian collective.[69]

Thus, while the entries AM 6302 and AM 6303 both begin with statements about Nikephoros' designs and their impact on "Christians," nevertheless in context each usage of "Christians" had a different referent. In AM 6302 the *Chronographia* stated that Nikephoros "removed Christians from all the *themata* and ordered them to proceed to the Sklavinias after selling their estates."[70] However, "Christians" here referred only to those whom Nikephoros had singled out. Nikephoros was "intent on humiliating the army," he did not oppose

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66   The entry for AM 6303 works towards its conclusion with eight clear mentions of a Christian collective targeted by Nikephoros who "extended his designs against the Christians" (MS 671 / dB 488), "encouraged mutual hostility and railed at every Christian who loved his neighbor" (MS 671 / dB 489), and who instituted "proceedings against all Christians at the penal tribunal of the Magnaura." (MS 672 / dB 489).

67   MS 673 / dB 491 (AM 6302).

68   C. Mango and R. Scott translate πᾶσά τε ἡ τῶν Χριστιανῶν καλλονὴ διεφθάρη with the idiom: "the flower of Christendom was destroyed." MS 673 / dB 491.13–14 (AM 6303).

69   Additional examples include: "Confusion among the Christians." MS 674 / dB 492 (AM 6303); and, "unsullied by Christian blood." MS 675 / dB 493 (AM 6303).

70   MS 667 / dB 486 (AM 6302).

the entire collective of Christians. Labeling the Roman citizens Nikephoros attacked as "Christians" simply served the rhetorical purpose of showing Nikephoros' actions caused *them* to renounce Christ and the Empire: "many in their folly uttered blasphemies and prayed to be invaded by the enemy."[71] The use of "Christians" in AM 6302 was to show the destruction in individual piety wrought by Nikephoros' greed, not to emphasize the collective of which the reader or audience was a part.

In contrast, the entry for AM 6303 changes the story even as it also emphasizes this universal collective of "we Christians" by sustaining certain themes—taking over an independent judiciary to seize power, undermining Christians' ability to be Christians, and acting according to greed. The narrative's argument is no longer to portray Nikephoros as the culmination of evil emperors—a point proven by showing him to be wholly evil in his own right— but to place him within a succession of heretical emperors whose drive is to oppose "the Christians," emperors whom "the Christians" can only defeat by being attentive to "our sins."

By changing the definition of the audience in these ways, AM 6303's portrayal of Nikephoros as the height of evil is no longer focused on proving that he is the image of the Antichrist, but on proving the level of suffering that the Christians had brought upon themselves. The passage ends with a prayer more a warning to the reader that a request to God: "May not Christians experience another time the ugly events of that day for which no lamentation is adequate." With the evil emperor now brutally murdered this entry shifts the onus for Nikephoros onto the entire community. The narrative has shifted from one that seeks understanding of the meaning of emperors' eras to one that proposed how to understand the status of the entire political-religious community. How did the Christians come to experience such an era, and how could they avoid doing so? The key lay in a new portrait of Nikephoros.

2.3   *Nikephoros I the Iconoclast: The Redefined Enemy of AM 6303*

In AM 6303 the text suddenly and surprisingly connects Nikephoros to the iconoclast emperors. At the beginning of the entry for AM 6303 an iconoclast preacher appears in Constantinople. Nikephoros is depicted as so enthusiastic about defending the preacher's right to preach iconoclasm that he prevented the patriarch Nikephoros from accusing the heretic.[72] This passage stops short

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71   MS 667 / dB 486 (AM 6302).

72   "At the Hexakionion, too, there was a false hermit called Nicholas who, together with his companions, blasphemed against the true religion and the holy icons and was defended by Nikephoros to the distress of the patriarch and of all those who lived according to God. Indeed, he [the emperor Nikephoros I] was vexed when the patriarch [Nikephoros] on many occasions brought charges against those men." MS 671 / dB 488–89 (AM 6303).

of calling Nikephoros an iconoclast, as he was not, but implies he is highly sympathetic to their cause. The reason provided for the emperor's stance explicitly refers the reader (as the new collective of "all Christians") back to Nikephoros' first evil action, the founding of the penal court in the Magnaura:

> ... for he greatly encouraged mutual hostility and railed at every Christian who loved his neighbor, being as he was a subverter of the divine ordinances. He was also eager for good or bad cause to institute proceedings against all Christians at the penal tribunal of the Magnaura so that nobody should be free to censure his impious deeds.[73]

The connection to the iconoclasts is more subtle but still significant. The epithet which the chronographer applies to Nikephoros—"subverter"—was the *Chronicle*'s label for iconoclast emperors, used for both Leo III and Constantine V.[74] The passage continues to catalogue Nikephoros' dedication to expanding imperial power but concludes with the foreshadowing already noted above: "But he was confounded in his imaginations, he whom God was to slay."

Thus the chronicler ties the new turn in the narrative to already established signposts.[75] Just as in AM 6302 the first of his "ten evils" caused many

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73   MS 671–72 / dB 489 (AM 6303).

74   Germanos speaks to Leo III and identifies (unwillingly) that Leo is prophesied to be the bringer of iconoclasm: "May this evil not be accomplished in your reign, O lord! For he who commits this deed is the precursor of the Antichrist and the subverter of the divine Incarnation!" MS 564 / dB 408 (AM 6221). Later, at the announcement of the coronation of Constantine V (to be joint emperor with his father Leo, who was still living), the chronographer gives Constantine this same epithet: AM 6233 (740/1): "In this year the subverter of our ancestral customs, Constantine, became emperor by God's judgment on account of the multitude of our sins." MS 575 / dB 414 (AM 6233).

75   A much earlier and uncharacteristically direct injunction to the reader may have been added as a part of the re-writing of the end of the *Chronographia* in AD 815 that I am proposing here. At the moment Leo III turns from "the pious" to the "impious," after a summary of chronology, the chronographer summarizes his point:
> The evils that befell the Christians at the time of the impious Leo both as regards the orthodox faith and civil administration ... for reasons of dishonest gain and avarice; furthermore, the secession of Italy because of his evil doctrine, the earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and foreign insurrections (not to mention all the details) have been related in the preceding chapters. It is now proper to review in succession the lawless deeds, yea, even more sacrilegious and abhorred by God, of his most impious and altogether wretched son, yet to do so objectively (inasmuch as all-seeing God is observing us) for the benefit of posterity and of those wretched and wicked men who still follow the abominable heresy of that criminal. (MS 573 / dB 413)"
The final injunction speaks to a present moment of crisis that is aware of a new iconoclasm, a present stumbling again into Leo's error. This passage—which *only* makes sense

Christians to deny their faith, so here Nikephoros is accused of trying to undermine the basic Christian injunction to "love thy neighbor." Nikephoros is still the Nikephoros who took the process of judicial appeal away from the people and brought it into the Magnaura, into the confines of the palace under his own jurisdiction. And he is still characterized by greed, seizing the rights to ecclesiastical landed and moveable properties by allowing military men to use church buildings as residences and by seizing the gold and silver treasures of churches as "common" (i.e. imperial).

However, the chronographer goes on to now also link Nikephoros' reign to the iconoclast emperors. After the death of Nikephoros, the chronographer claims:

> At no time did Christians have the misfortune of experiencing a rule more grievous than his. He surpassed all his predecessors by his greed, his licentiousness, his barbaric cruelty: to describe everything in detail would be for us a laborious task and make a story that future generations will not believe. [But] as the proverb says, the cloth can be judged by its hem.[76]

Consistent with the rest of the entry, Nikephoros' greed has become a weapon against [we] Christians rather than a proof of Nikephoros as the All-Devourer. This concluding statement about Nikephoros' ultimate characteristic also places the entire harangue in the context of the discourse against the iconoclasts as a sort of anti-gospel. The statement "to describe everything in detail would be for us a laborious task" echoes the reference to a gospel passage at the very end of the reign of Constantine V, AM 6258.[77] There the invective against Constantine V discussed how Constantine had appointed three *strategoi* to enforce iconoclasm in the provinces. The chronographer had concluded:

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as a retroactive addition written by someone who knows that iconoclasm has returned—has only ever been read as a much later addition, but there is no reason *not* to take it as an addition made by the same author who also wrote the concluding entries AM 6303—AM 6305 in AD 815. In any case, similar to the contrast between the narrative voice of AM 6302 and that of AM 6303, this "scholium" also breaks the narrative voice at this point in the *Chronicle* and tells the reader to make iconoclasm the central issue for the rest of the *Chronographia*. At this point in the original text, with the original agenda which I have described in chapters 5, 6, and 7, this is a perplexing and confusing injunction that is out of sorts with the issues I demonstrated animate that portion of the *Chronicle*.

76   MS 674 / dB 491–92 (AM 6303).

77   MS 608 / dB 440–41 (AM 6258). This passage was one of the few in which the author had tellingly revealed himself, as discussed in detail in section 1.1.

> Who would be able to recount their sacrilegious deeds, some of which we
> shall describe in their proper places? For if one were to set down all the
> deeds they committed to win the emperor's favour, it is fair to say with
> the Gospel that the whole world would not contain the books that should
> be written concerning them.[78]

The echoes of the end of the Gospel According to John in this phrasing have
already been discussed in chapter 6. In the similar passage about Nikephoros
the idea is given the slightly different formulation of an impossible quantity of
stories to relate, but still parrots the general idea that like the deeds of Christ
Nikephoros' deeds are unrelatable in their multitude. The contrast already
pointed out remains: the earlier iconoclasts committed sacrilegious actions,
but Nikephoros' entire reign was an attack against the Christians.

2.4   *Michael I the Peaceful: The New Paradigm of* AM 6304

The *Chronicle*'s new agenda in these final three entries drew on the positive
imperial type—the emperors who repented—discussed in chapter 6. The
Chronicle had crafted portraits of generous early Roman emperors and bishops
as martyrs for unity. It had moved into an image of liberality and piety in the
portrait of Constantine I guided by Helena, and of Theodosios II guided by
Pulcheria. It then put those who strove for the ideal of Theodosios II under
Pulcheria into images of repentant emperors such as Justin, Justinian, and
Maurice. All of these strands were brought together in the reign of Irene and
her son Constantine VI to show how an ambitious emperor could still achieve
Pulcheria-like policies of generosity and unity. The portrait of Irene built on
the model of the repentant emperor who undid the work of evil predecessors
and thus managed to stave off the inevitable judgement to come. The reign
of Irene had earlier been crafted as an antidote to Constantine V's portrait as
the "Forerunner to the Antichrist." Irene showed how—from her fiscal poli-
cies to her response to her own imperial sins—to be a good emperor in evil
times. Irene's portrait was ultimately an image in the form of Maurice: an
emperor who needed to repent and did so to the point of martyrdom. A ruler
in the model of Irene was the *Chronicle*'s original idea of hope for the future.
If Nikephoros I was the *Chronicle*'s ultimate opponent, Irene's repentance was
the new end of the *Chronographia* project, a way to stave off "evil and igno-
rance, and the Devil who is its author."

   The last two entries of the *Chronicle* build on this paradigm by present-
ing a world in which the emperors Michael I and Leo V hold firm against the

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78   MS 608 / dB 440-441 (AM 6258).

temptation of imperial greed, against the people's iconoclasm, and against the schismatic tendencies among the doctrinally pious monks of the monastery of St. John in Stoudios. The thrust of the narrative is that the emperors are holding strong as yet, but that there is a pressing need for the Romans to right themselves and support their emperors' desires for good. Michael I, for instance, was beset from many sides:

> distressed by those who severed themselves from the holy Church for any cause whatever—reasonable and unreasonable—and [Michael] did not cease begging on their behalf the most holy patriarch and those able to contribute to the general peace.[79]

For all of the imperial efforts—"the pious emperor Michael executed not a few of those heretics"[80]—in the end it is the Roman people who must preserve unity and peace.

Michael himself saved the Romans from the succession to Nikephoros' son Staurakios who—despite being desperately wounded on his father's fated campaign—sought to retain imperial power.[81] The *Chronographia*'s image of Michael I is thus another foil to Nikephoros' all-consuming greed. A dying Staurakios sought to withhold the last of his father's unjust seizures from church treasuries. Michael "being magnanimous and liberal" instead "indemnified all those who had been injured by the greed of Nikephoros and restored the Senate and the army by means of gifts."[82] Like Irene, Michael is presented as a model of liberality and repentant restoration. He rejuvenates domestic governance and relations with the western Roman empire by inviting patriarch Nikephoros to correspond with the pope Leo and re-opening marriage negotiations with "Karoulos, king of the Franks."

While Michael I presents an image of how to protect the faith against Nikephoros' "iconoclasm," the difficulty is the corruption of the Christian Romans "who had neglected to censure the evil doctrines prevalent among many men, namely the widespread heresies of God's enemies, the Paulicians, Athinganoi, iconoclasts and Tetraditai." Under Michael it is the collective of the Roman people who now call for a return to the policies of Constantine V by arguing that "he had won victories over the Bulgarians thanks to his piety,"

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79   MS 678 / dB 494 (AM 6304).

80   MS 678 / dB 495 (AM 6304).

81   The two officials to whom Staurakios appealed to ensure his transition to real power—the patrician and military *domestikos* Stephen and the ministerial *magistros* Theoktistos—end up directly supporting Michael instead.

82   MS 677 / dB 493–494 (AM 6304).

meaning his iconoclasm.[83] The Roman people are clamoring for their emperors to become iconoclasts. The *Chronographia*'s rhetoric chastises the people and begs the emperor to resist.

2.5   *The New Iconoclasm: The Warning of* AM 6305

The end of the entry for AM 6305 places Krum—the ruler of the Bulgars who had defeated and beheaded Nikephoros—in opposition to the new emperor Leo V in Biblical terms. The Romans are a new Chosen People led by a pious king but suffer due to their own sins. Thus the *Chronographia* places the nascent reign of Leo V within the drama we have tracked as a question of whether or not the Roman empire will remain pure, or whether it will fall prey to "our sins," its own schismatic tendencies.

When the Bulgarians surrounded Constantinople, the emperor Leo V prayed that his city's walls would not suffer the destruction the residents deserved "because of the multitude of our sins." Krum is here labelled "the new Sennacherib" in apparent reference to the ancient Assyrian king's campaigns against Hezekiah of Judah. According to the Biblical account of that campaign, Sennacherib had devastated the countryside of Judea but failed to sack Jerusalem, guarded by the pious king Hezekiah. So Krum also looted suburban palaces, took surrounding cities such as Adrianople, but left Constantinople unharmed under the guard of Leo V, "pious, extremely courageous, and fit in every respect to assume the kingship." Although the emperor's intercessions are heard by God and Leo keeps the City safe, when Leo tries to solidify the victory by executing Krum his plot is nevertheless unsuccessful because of his own people. Leo is "prevented from accomplishing this plan by the multitude of our sins."

Leo's purported piety establishes the dramatic choice before the collective group of Christian readers. Just before Krum's bivouacking of the City, an anti-liturgy takes place at the Church of the Holy Apostles, the ancient cathedral of Constantine the Great.[84] During the performance of the liturgy the supporters of Constantine V called out for the dead iconoclast emperor—"the God-hated ... deceiver ... who dwells in Hell in the company of demons!"—to arise as an anti-image of Christ and "save a civilization on the brink" of disaster. These supporters of Constantine V were calling for Leo V to turn to iconoclasm and restore the military prowess and success of the Roman empire.

This anecdote accomplishes several purposes. First, it is the clear sign that the Roman Empire is still in the age of Constantine V, his historical

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83   MS 679 / dB 496 (AM 6304).
84   MS 684 / dB 501.10–11 (AM 6305).

image a shadow over the present. Second, in the image of Constantine V, the *Chronographia* frames its drama in terms of a choice for or against iconoclasm. But finally, unlike in the accounts of either Constantine V or Nikephoros I, the agency to make the choice for good does not lie with the emperors—as indeed it had throughout the entire *Chronographia*—but with the people. The potential for resolution was left to the reader in the persona of the entire people of the Christian Romans. The last entries of the *Chronographia* thus built to a historical crisis in which the Roman people themselves would determine whether Leo V could stay the course or fall from "the pious" to "the impious," as had his namesake Leo III. The choice before the people remained in the balance: the *Chronographia* did not resolve the choice in its conflicting images. Would the reader "save (our) civilization" by turning from the "multitude of our sins"?

Before drawing these threads together, I want to be clear that the idea of "our sins" being to blame for crises is not without precedence in the *Chronographia*. The emperor Julian's reign was attributed to a disunity which was the result of "the mass of our sins."[85] The victories of the Bulgars and Avars during the reign of Constantine IV are attributed directly to God's will that "the Romans be put to shame for their many sins."[86] The iconoclast emperors themselves were at times explained as God's desire to teach the Romans piety. Leo III's reign began with the opportunity to "learn by experience that God and the all-holy Virgin, the Mother of God, protect this City and the Christian Empire, and [to learn] that those who call upon God in truth are not entirely forsaken, even if we are chastised for a short time on account of our sins."[87] And, Constantine V's reign was the fault of the Christian people, who were to suffer that emperor "by God's judgment on account of the multitude of our sins."[88] Nikephoros I's rebellion against Irene under AM 6295 also began by nothing that "God, in his inscrutable judgment permitted this because of the multitude of our sins."[89] Finally, the empress Irene acknowledged that "the cause of my downfall I attribute to myself and to my sins."[90]

Nevertheless, though AM 6303 certainly echoes these instances, the idea of "our sins" is given a unique coherence and intensity in these final entries.

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85   MS 76 / dB 46 (AM 5853).

86   MS 499 / dB 359 (AM 5171). Constantine IV himself is presented in a positive light for pushing back against the doctrine of monotheletism.

87   MS 546 / dB 397–98 (AM 6209).

88   MS 575 / dB 414 (AM 6233).

89   MS 655 / dB 476 (AM 6295). Nikephoros' reign closes by wondering "who would be able to give an adequate account of the deeds committed by him in those days by God's dispensation on account of our sins?" MS 658 / dB 480 (AM 6295).

90   MS 656 / dB 478 (AM 6295).

After AM 6303 the text does not use "Christians" to frame actions against specific Roman citizens but against the Romans as a collective. The persistence and repetitiveness of this usage places the reader in a new moral crisis. Up to AM 6303 the *Chronographia* invited its reader to identify typological connections between the actions of emperors. But in these last entries the nature of participatory reading changed to self-reflection, from a call to identify the Antichrist to a call for repentance. The new emphasis on "our sins" shifted the onus of responsibility for the present and thus action into the future from the emperor onto a collective. Instead of deciding what to think about a particular ruler, the reader is placed within a larger political collective and warned to change their ways lest God visit suffering and even destruction upon all Roman Christians.[91] In terms of historical ecclesiology, these final entries change the rhetorical frame from an impending apocalypse brought about by an evil king to the long historical drama of the Chosen People of God where "we Christians" are heirs to the children of Israel's pursuit of God-pleasing purity.[92] The specific sin which the collective must avoid to maintain purity before God is the heresy of iconoclasm. But why would the group behind the *Chronographia* project need to re-frame the entire work in this way? Why would this group re-fashion the end of the text so that it became a self-reflective challenge to resist temptation, to resist the urge to return to the false promises of the Age of Constantine V, the Forerunner to the Antichrist?

3   AM 6303–6305 and the Community of the *Chronographia*

In the new political landscape of AD 815, the community behind the *Chronographia* had risen from exile to the palace. But in this moment of triumph, the alliance of imperial and ecclesiastical bureaucrats around Arsaber faced a particularly intense crisis. I will argue that though the community directly behind the *Chronographia* had influence within the new regime of Leo V, they do not seem to have had power. Insofar as they had control over the *Chronographia* they had the ability to shape and reshape the past to the present, and they seem to have made good use of that resource by using the last three entries to fashion a strong pragmatic turn that sought to deal with

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91   See the rarity of "we Christians" in the early part of the *Chronographia*. Of all mentions of "Christians" in the *Chronographia*, very few are explicitly first-person plural. For example: "Christians just like us" MS 65 / dB 39 (AM 5840); "directed against us, Christians" MS 463 / dB 3333 (AM 6122).

92   Shay Eshel, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, MM 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

the questions posed by the new political present: (1) What did it mean that Nikephoros (the apparent Antichrist) was now dead? (2) What did it mean for the group behind the *Chronographia* to participate in a discourse of power rather than martyrdom? And, (3) What was to be said about the fact that the head of this new political alliance, the emperor, had turned towards the iconoclasm of Constantine V?

I believe the final entries answered these questions by redirecting the project, by swerving the *Chronographia*'s long historical argument towards the new impetus of iconoclasm. Constantine V had originally been given the title of "forerunner" not because of a need to attack iconoclasts but in order to set up the damning portrait of Nikephoros I. The genius of the second ending was to relieve the portrait of Constantine V from dependence on the portrait of Nikephoros and to refashion it as a condemnation of iconoclasm in its own right, turning a focus on the All-Devourer into a focus on the consequences of iconoclasm.[93]

The overlooked connection in the account of the reign of Nikephoros between the "Armenian faction" of Bardanes Tourkos, the co-rebels and allies of Arsaber the *quaestor*, as well as the conjunction between these groups and the political ethic of the *Chronographia* are the keys to unlocking the implications of its second ending for our understanding of the political moment of 815.[94] Reading the entries for AM 6303–6305 as being completed in 815 instead of 813 allows us to read the work in light of the interests of the associates of Arsaber who in AD 815 were committed to the universalizing interests of the ruling regime. Those interests coincide with the text's clear support for the reign of Leo V over that of Michael I.[95] The three final entries therefore speak directly to the way the interests of the community of the *Chronographia* had changed between AD 810 and AD 815. The second end or purpose of the

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93   The *Chronicle* had crafted a clever, subtle, and yet damning portrait of an emperor who was the Devourer of All but who was also an iconophile. That this vitriol focused on an "orthodox" emperor underscores how important it is to remember that the political discourse of the time had plenty of room for debate without reference to iconoclasm. This is an essential reminder that the "inter-iconoclast" period never understood itself in this way, but had its own indigenous issues, its own networks, opinions, debates, and controversies.

94   C. Mango and R. Scott (*Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 659n14) observe that this is a much more favorable account—especially of the revolt of Bardanes—than in the later histories of Theophanes Continuatus, Gregory Monachos, and Genesios.

95   Though "the emperor Michael was kindly and gentle towards everyone," he could not be trusted to hold steadily on the reigns of state for long since "in the administration of affairs he was incompetent and subservient to the *magistros* Theoktistos and to other dignitaries." MS 683 / DB 499–500 (AM 6305).

Chronographia project would fit this masterwork to the needs of the group in the specific moment of AD 815 in Constantinople.

When Leo V ascended the throne in AD 813, Arsaber and his supporters also came to power. By marrying his daughter Theodosia to Leo V, Arsaber had added his allies to those of Leo V. Leo's support was also constituted around the legacy of the figure of Bardanes Tourkos, whose predominantly Armenian faction or *hetaireia* had come together while serving in the Asiatic *thema* of the Anatolikon.[96] The significance of this alliance lies in my identification of Arsaber as not only the former *quaestor* but as the former *strategos* of the Thrakesions (i.e. Thrace). Arsaber's personal history as *strategos* of Thrace not only explains why the imperial *Tagmata* regiments supported his rebellion in 806–808, but perhaps also how Leo V had enough support from the army to become emperor himself. When Arsaber married his daughter Theodosia to Leo V this may well have connected his Thracian military supporters to those of Bardanes on the Asian side of the empire.

Why would Arsaber's allies coming to power have generated a new end to the *Chronographia*? We have already shown how the *Chronographia* linked Bardanes' and Arsaber's revolts by tying them both to support of the reign of Irene. The authorial persona of George the Synkellos and his associations with Syria-Palestine, as well as the work's long-proven attention to events in that region might lead us to associate the work with a group of refugees or émigrés from that region living in Constantinople.[97] It is in this light that we should read the above-mentioned description of the flight of "Christians of Palestine: monks and laymen from all of Syria" as refugees from the "general anarchy that prevailed in Syrian, Egypt, Africa and all [the 'Abbasids'] entire

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96   See note 30 on the term *hetaireia*, the use of which I take from Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 65.

97   For instance, just before the *Chronographia* concludes its final entries with the Bulgarian campaign against Constantinople and the anti-liturgy at the Church of the Holy Apostles, the narrative expands the reach and scope of the idea of the Christians to include those outside of the empire in the Holy Land of Syria-Palestine. This dovetails well with the famous "eastern" focus of the *Chronographia*, but here in the final entries cannot be attributed simply to an accidental result of the use of a "dossier" of Eastern material to fill out entries. See Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, lxxxii–lxxxv. And now: Maria Conterno, "Theophilos, 'The More Likely Candidate?' Towards a Reappraisal of the Question of Theophanes' 'Oriental Source(s),'" in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 383–400; Muriel Debié, "Theophanes' 'Oriental Source': What Can We Learn from Syriac Historiography?," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 365–82; Robert G. Hoyland, "Agapius, Theophilos, and Muslim Sources," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 355–64.

dominion."[98] Finally, I have also shown how the group of officials—both imperial and ecclesiastical—in the AD 808 revolt should also be associated with the patriarchate of Nikephoros I.[99]

To the extent that the above hypothesis about the alliances behind the *Chronographia* is accepted, I can propose this conglomerate group as the community of readers whose ideas, discussions, and political aspirations formed the context within which the *Chronographia* came into being. This group consisted of the powerful "Armenian" military elites, the family of Irene (whose relative was essentially forced into marrying Staurakios in 809 as under AM 6301), with the imperial and ecclesiastical civic elites dissatisfied with Nikephoros' reform of the administration, and with whatever Syrian diaspora George the Synkellos may have been associated. All of this gives substantive content to the new narrative dynamic at the conclusion to the *Chronographia*.

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98   MS 683 / dB 499 (AM 6305). This notation of the refugees from a realm of "impious" (i.e., unjust) rule seeking sanctuary from the Romans refers chronologically back to the five-year persecution noted under the entry for AM 6301: "the slaughter resulting from this anarchy, *directed at each other and against us*, lasted five years." MS 665 / dB 484. Emphasis mine. And, as noted above in AM 6305 (which, counting inclusively, marks the fifth year), "Christians" were now "fleeing the excessive misdeeds of the Arabs ... as a result of the general anarchy that prevailed." MS 665 / dB 484 vs. MS 683 / dB 499. I showed this was likely added later by the author of the final entries of the *Chronographia*. If we now pause, we notice that the "continuator" returned to the entry for the year AM 6300 to incorporate those fleeing persecution—new immigrants from Syria—into the narrative as a part of the community of Roman Christians, and likely also into the faction behind the *Chronographia*. Among those arriving in Constantinople from Syria in AM 813 was Michael the *synkellos* of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, whom I discuss in the following chapter.

99   Nikephoros I the patriarch had been trying to shift the power away from Nikephoros I the emperor. He could do that because though he had been appointed by the emperor, he had actually come to power with the support of the Patriarch Tarasios. Confirming this, the *Chronicle* seems to see no paradox in giving strong approval to the Patriarch Nicephoros, despite his having been chosen by the detested emperor Nicephoros. For sympathetic treatment of the patriarch Nicephoros, see MS 661 / dB 481.22–32 (AM 6298), MS 674 / dB 492.15–17 and MS 674 / dB 493.10–14 (AM 6303), MS 678 / dB 494.33–495.6 (AM 6304), and MS 683 / dB 499.25–28 (AM 6305). See especially support of patriarch Nikephoros I in asides directed towards the monks of St. John in Stoudios. "Certain persons" convinced the emperor not to expel the Stoudites from the city entirely. The advice preserved the legacy of the patriarch Nikephoros I: "the patriarch's ordination would not be commended if it were accompanied by the expulsion of the aforesaid men and the dissolution of so great a monastery." The *Chronicle* eviscerates the Stoudite objection: "what had been done was not alien to the Church nor was it a recent invention, since many other laymen had become bishops and ministered unto God in a manner worthy of their dignity." MS 661 / dB 481 end. See Paul J. Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1958), 65.

The Christian people who need to take responsibility for "our sins" is this very group, now adjacent to full imperial power, itself constituted as a diasporic Christian people that is contained within the historic and providential notion of the Roman Empire as the οἰκουμένη which far exceeds the current bounds of its actual *imperium*. The people whose collective sins are now the cause of their troubles—the generic "us" of the first end but which in the final entries became "(we) Christians" responsible for "our sins"[100]—is strikingly consistent with the multi-ethnic group suddenly in power who must now take responsibility for the direction of the Roman empire.

Thus, the beautifully complex and unique historical account of the *Chronographia* should be read as an explanation of, a history of, the logics of this alliance. I have argued that the first end of the *Chronographia* was to explain two revolts that had failed to achieve ultimate power in the empire. In this context we might also imagine some portion of this alliance patronizing George the Synkellos' composition. We might even imagine how the *Chronographia* could have been read as a mirror for princes, as an argument that the successful wielding of imperial power needed a balance between male and female rule (as in chapter 6) that not only justified Irene but also gave Leo V and Theodosia a model to follow.

Everything that we have argued about the *Chronographia*'s way of framing the past shows how it was perfectly tuned to the self-conception of the groups aligned under Arsaber, patriarch Nikephoros, and now ascendent under Leo V. When Leo V came to the throne in 813, the *Chronographia* was poised to take its rightful place as a newly-endowed imperial history which associated the ruling faction with mercy, justice, and liberality in opposition to the greedy Antichrist that was the All-Devourer Nikephoros I. As this community and its associates moved from rebels in exile to occupants of the palace, they must have felt like the prophets of a new age. By 815 the reality of the *imperium* had destroyed any such notions. The story of the *Chronographia*'s final three entries is the story of how this group of iconophiles staked out a new position of support for Leo V even as he turned to a policy of iconoclasm.[101]

Whatever the actual connection may be between the *Chronographia* and the historic Theophanes (the Confessor and abbot of Megas Agros), it is a fact that the *Preface* directly associates him with the completion of the work.

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100 Mentioned in the beginning of the first of the three final entries at MS 671 / dB 488 (AM 6303) and then repeatedly in the conclusion to the final entry at MS 684–85 / dB 501 and at MS 686 / dB 503 (AM 6305).

101 That Leo's supporters consisted of many iconophiles is not surprising at all. See: Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 15.

Though neither surviving hagiographic *Vita* of Theophanes mentions his authorship of the *Chronographia*, both agree that Theophanes was summoned to testify for the iconophile position at the council of 814. He was summoned to attend but he did not because of his health. He is said to have been tried personally by John the Grammarian and then detained in the capital for two years.[102] Theophanes earned his title of Confessor for this testimony under duress, in which context we might also imagine him representing the coalition behind the *Chronographia* of the deceased George the Synkellos, the patriarch Nikephoros I, the empress Theodosia, and perhaps Arsaber himself. It must be emphasized once again that the first end of the *Chronographia* was not about promoting iconophilism. And neither was the second end written to promote iconophilism so much as to moderate iconoclasm from within the political alliance which was enforcing it. The second end of the *Chronographia* was thus meant to be the fulfillment of the political ambitions embedded in its account of the reign of Nikephoros. However, this moment of perfect harmony fell into discord even as it came to fulfillment. Just as the *Chronographia* was poised to be the historical instrument of the new age, Leo V disrupted its tuning.

The council of 814 thus destroyed the very political consensus that the *Chronographia* would indicate had brought Leo V to the throne. The *Chronographia* was highly supportive of Nikephoros I as the patriarch, aligned as he was with the faction of Arsaber and a direct supporter of Leo's original coup.[103] Nevertheless, the council of 814 was not only undertaken without

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102   That is, the life by Theodore Studite is in these respects in agreement with the life by Methodios. Confusingly in that text, Nikephoros, Staurakios, and Michael are all praised (ch. 42) but this is to be explained by the context of 843–847 more than with the viewpoint of the faction of Arsaber in 815. The relevant details are that around 809/810 Theophanes fell ill (ch. 43) and he was bedridden to the end of his life (ch. 44). He was summoned to the capital sometime after 24 June 815 (ch. 46) and tried by John Grammarian (ch. 47). After his conviction he was taken to the palace of Eleutherios (note the association with Irene), where he stayed for two years (ch. 48). After being transferred to Samothrace on 18 February, 818, he died there (ch. 50 and 54) after only 22 days on 12 March. Miracles were reported around his body (ch. 56), which was translated to Hiereia at first (ch. 57) between 17–23 March and after a year to Megas Agros (ch. 58). After the death of Leo V on 25 December 820, Theophanes' body was translated back to Megas Agros in March of 822. See the summary by Mango and Scott (pp. xliv–xlix; li).

103   While the emperor Michael I "was making his homeward escape [from a failed campaign against the Bulgars], cursing the army and its commanders" he was "swearing he could abdicate the Empire." His choice fell on "the patrician Leo, the *strategos* of the Anatolics" for the reasons that "the later was pious, extremely courageous, and fit in every respect to assume the kingship." Leo initially refused, but "the most holy patriarch Nikephoros agreed to this course because if another were appointed under such circumstances, the emperor and his children would be spared." In other words: Leo V could be trusted as a man of his word to show mercy and prudence in rule. Leo finally agreed when he "wrote to the patriarch Nikephoros an assurance of his own orthodoxy and asked for his prayers

the support of the patriarch, it was called in spite of his direct opposition. When Leo V deposed the patriarch for his disloyalty it must have necessitated a rift in the community we have identified. On the one hand, Arsaber's daughter, the empress Theodosia, opposed her husband in this and begged him to leave the Patriarch enthroned and continue in the policies of his immediate predecessors.[104] On the other hand, Leo V ignored Theodosia and forcibly removed Nikephoros from the patriarchal throne with the help of Arsaber's own son, Theophanes.[105] Immediately, in 815, Nikephoros composed a polemical treatise against the entire proceeding.[106] The rift created by Leo V's council extended into the immediate family of Arsaber.[107]

Perhaps the reason Leo V broke with previous policy is embedded in the *Chronographia* itself. Did Leo and his closest advisors think that the alliances and networks which had brought him to the throne were already too powerful?[108] Perhaps Leo's turn to an iconoclast policy was seen as a way to re-center political discourse around himself, a strategy scholars have attributed to the Isaurians Leo III and Constantine V.[109] In any case, the regime that Leo V articulated at the Council of 815 and the worldview articulated by the *Chronographia* were not compatible. The great synthesis of the *Chronographia* had tied all of time to defining Nikephoros I as the devil of the new age, it had reconceptualized time itself to justify two revolts against that emperor. But

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and consent with a view to assuming the power." Accordingly, "he was most legitimately proclaimed emperor of the Romans" and on July 12, "Leo was crowned by the patriarch Nikephoros in the ambo of the Great Church [of Hagia Sophia]." MS 685–86 / dB 502 (AM 6305).

104   As noted above in section 1.4. Genesios, *On the Reigns of Emperors* 1.18. Ed. Anthony Kaldellis, *Genesios on the Reigns of the Emperors*, BYZAUS 11 (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998), 20. And, Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronography* 1.22. Ed. [Jeffrey] Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur Libri I–IV*, CFHB 53 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 35.7. Translated by Wortley, *John Skylitzes*, 22 with n23.

105   According to Ignatios Diakonos' *Vita* of the Patriarch Nikephoros. Ed. Karl de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opuscula historica* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1880.), 190–91.

106   Edited by Jeffrey M. Featherstone, *Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani: refutatio et eversio definitionis synodalis anni 815* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997). Using hagiographical texts as historical sources must be done with care, and they should never be treated as though their goal is to construct what we mean by historical biographies. Sergei Hackel, ed., *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 14 (San Bernardino: Borgo Press, 1987).

107   Theodosia's break with her husband Leo V extended to pleading for mercy for Michael the Amorian, right up until the night Michael's supporters murdered Leo V. See: Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 63–72.

108   Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 17–20.

109   Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)."

it had done so by in no small part damning the legacy of the iconoclasts. Leo V could still put together his own political agenda from the ethic of imperial power laid out by the *Chronographia*—characterized by policies of generosity, liberality, and unity within the *ecclesia*—but Leo's agenda was ultimately incompatible with the *Chronographia*'s strident opposition to past iconoclasts.[110] Although much of the *Chronographia* still worked in Leo's favor, his regime could not promote such a work. Leo V might still speak the political language of the *Chronographia* but its story could not be his own.

This context is the impetus for our second ending. Those who had crafted the *Chronographia* brought its story into the new era of Leo V, an era for which they were responsible but which was quickly and unexpectedly turning against their values. Written by and for the network of allies who coalesced around Leo, helped him to power, and took over as the ruling faction of the empire, the *Chronographia* had nevertheless not anticipated that future. The second end rewrote the story. It reframed the *Chronographia* in light of the unexpected political crisis. This reframing is entirely coherent with the perspective of those around Arsaber (Theodosia, Theophanes the Confessor, patriarch Nikephoros, and perhaps even Arsaber himself) who yet sought to influence Leo V to return to the set of policies and ideologies that had united them all in opposition to Nikephoros I. Rather than reading those who wrote the final entries of the *Chronographia* (AM 6303 to AM 6305) as either ignorant of or hiding from the fact that Leo V was pursuing an iconoclast policy, these entries read coherently as a rallying cry from Leo V's own powerful supporters—perhaps from a circle now centered on the patriarch Nikephoros I—to reclaim the discourse of power. In the early years of the reign of Leo V it would have been essential for these supporters to continue to promote the idea that Leo V could be a "pious emperor" in the model of one of the imperial types of the *Chronographia*.

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110   In that light, it is worth pausing to note that it would still have been possible for supporters of Leo V to argue from the very terms of the *Chronographia* itself that those claiming to be "orthodox" were acting like "heretics," which the *Chronographia* consistently characterized as divisiveness. Specifically, when Leo V came to the throne, the Stoudite monks had swelled to the thousands and were encamped within the city walls in direct opposition to the patriarch Nikephoros I. They had opposed Tarasios over the Moechian affair, and they still opposed Nikephoros over his election. These staunch "defenders of orthodoxy" were acting in the image the *Chronographia* had constructed for historical heresiarchs. Leo V, defining heretics as those that persecute and divide, may have taken the *Chronographia*'s lesson to heart by choosing to rid the capital of *both* Nikephoros I (the patriarch), and the Stoudites. Leo's iconoclasm was (at first) a non-persecutory iconoclasm. We should allow Leo the possibility of having taken a reading, his own reading, of the *Chronographia* to heart.

4   The Second End(ing) of the *Chronographia*

The ultimate impetus for the *Chronographia*—from the First-Created Day thesis to the portrait of Nikephoros I—was to bring together the whole of the Roman past in a way that gave it meaning in the present. The portraits of past bishops and emperors as figural types in an eschatological framework combined particular political virtues and vices to make sense of the reigns of recent emperors. In this chapter I have been concerned with the private histories embedded in these portraits. Until recently our standard accounts of political alliances in this period started with the premise that the citizens of the empire distinguished themselves in terms of competing doctrinal orthodoxies: iconoclasm remained the implicit if not explicit framework.[111] Even when we renounce this paradigm, it takes much more than a general recanting of the historical vision of the Triumph of Orthodoxy to be able to read the surviving sources on their own terms. That scholars have not internalized a different paradigm is seen by what we still choose to ignore or leave unresolved. Why the iconophile *Chronographia* would be so vicious to the iconophile Nikephoros I has been left unexplained, as has how an iconophile *Chronographia* could be so naïve as to call Leo V "pious" months before he imposed iconoclasm.

My counter proposal has been developed from pursuing the second end of the *Chronographia* as written between 814–815. This has revealed not only a more complex text but also a richer context. The first and the second endings of the *Chronographia* (AM 6302 and AM 6305) belong to the same political community. But this community had developed different needs in the five years between the writing of these two ends. The two very different endings for the work arose from the group's changing circumstances between the years 810 and 815. Though AM 6302 had served their purposes while Nikephoros I was alive, the authors of the *Chronographia* needed a new ending that brought the story of the past up to their new present. The challenge was to redirect the river of history from a course that had already flowed through 6,302 years.

Shortly after he became emperor, Leo V reorganized the alliances that brought him to the throne. He consolidated power around his person through his return to an iconoclastic framing of the *imperium*. If the *Chronographia* was written for the parts of the political alliance which brought Leo to power but which were bound to oppose his iconoclasm, we should expect it to be

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111   Auzépy, "State of Emergency (700–850)."

dynamic in its treatment of that policy. And indeed, even at its most strident the *Chronographia* did not condemn heretics or even praise orthodoxy in specifically theological terms. Instead it presented the "piety" of emperors as something known by their fruit: a "pious" emperor was revealed by a unified and peaceful *imperium* and *ecclesia*.

The *Chronographia* was not first written to promote a pro-icon policy but it certainly assumed that an iconoclast policy was evil. This explains why these final entries—far from triumphant—imply a new impending crisis that is not explicitly named. Even as Leo V came to power, his policy changes caused a rift in the very alliance that had brought him to the throne. Leo's sin was not so much iconoclasm *per se*, but the disunity brought about by impiety. In this case that specifically meant his bringing about disunity within his own network of allies and relations. If we read these final entries in light of the crises facing the groups allied behind the *Chronographia*, it becomes clear that they directly address the key question before these factions in 814/815: what shall we do about our own Leo?

The last entry of the *Chronicle*, and so of the entire surviving *Chronographia* project, describes a dramatic event in the second year of the Emperor Michael I (r. 811–813). According to the entry in the 805th Year-of-the-Divine-Incarnation (AD 812/13) and the 6,305th Year-of-the-World, a litany was celebrated by Nikephoros I, patriarch of Constantinople, in a packed Church of the Holy Apostles. In the midst of the celebration, supporters of the deceased Constantine V (r. 741–775) broke off from the crowd and forced open the mausoleum of that emperor, now three-decades deceased. The narrative proceeds to turn this event into an image of a false resurrection to a false Christ by false apostles proclaiming a false gospel. The Holy Apostles—in whose church this liturgy was celebrated—were those who had dedicated themselves to proclaiming the message of the Christ. These new messengers of Constantine V were anti-Apostles for they did not demand Christ but "the God-hating Constantine." That is, they showed themselves to be antitypes of the Holy Apostles by demanding the coming to life of the dead emperor whom they proclaimed as another savior. The men "fell before the imposter's (πλάνος) tomb" and by "calling on him and not on God" their supplications put Constantine V before Christ.

Then, utilizing the same christological formulas as the sanctioned holy liturgy, they sang out to *their* lord in words reserved for *the* Lord:

> Ἀνάστηθι!
> Καὶ βοήθησον τῇ πολιτείᾳ ἀπολλυμένῃ!

> Arise! (*the invocation of the Resurrection*)
> And save the perishing state![112]

The City Prefect would find these men guilty of "blessing Constantine V as prophet and victor and embracing his wrong-teaching in an upending (ἐπ' ἀνατροπῇ) of the incarnate economy (οἰκουμένη) of our lord Jesus Christ."[113] The chronographer leaves the reader in no doubt that all this is worship of an Antichrist—"he who dwells in Hell in the company of demons!" (ὁ τάρταρον οἰκῶν μετὰ δαιμόνων).

Despite the *Chronographia*'s abhorrence at this antithesis of true religion, the desire expressed by the worshippers at the tomb of Constantine was the very same as that which drove the entire co-authored project. The heretical anti-apostles of this Antichrist desired the image of the emperor to rise up and show the way to save their polity: the civilization, the πολιτεία, the *res publica*. In its conclusion the *Chronographia* used this picture of a community on the brink of perishing, even of damnation, to bring forth images of emperors past. Just like the protestors it condemned, the *Chronographia* sought to use these resurrected images to show a way through the harrowing present into a peaceful and prosperous future.

S. Papaioannou has set the making of "Byzantine *historia*" in the context of the making of images and the writing of lives, highlighting the similar social functions of icons, *vitae*, and histories. The present book has been similarly devoted to shifting historians' view of the message and meaning of the *Chronographia* project from the lens of a very specific debate over images— the iconoclast controversy—to historical images more generally. We have seen the text making images of the emperors, historical images, to bear true meaning to readers via the means described by Papaioannou:

> Byzantine histories may navigate between myth-making and myth-breaking. They aim at the former through encomium or teleological views of time. They gesture to the latter by alerting the reader to the impact of rhetoric on history-writing, by their consciousness of the limitations of earlier sources, or by deconstructing the aura of imperial power.[114]

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112   C. Mango and R. Scott: "Arise, and save the state that is perishing!" ᴍꜱ 684 / dB 501.10–11.

113   C. Mango and R. Scott: "extolling Constantine as a prophet and victor and embracing his impiety so as to subvert the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." ᴍꜱ 685 / dB 501.24–27.

114   Stratis Papaioannou, "Byzantine Historia," in *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 302. Citing S. Papaioannou (2010) and P. Magdalino (1983).

All these moves can be found in the *Chronographia*. There is some conservatism, but there is a great deal of "freedom from tradition."[115] The work made and broke myths to accomplish its specific ends. Its ends sought the deconstruction of a certain vision of imperial power, for we have seen that this chronography was no panegyric but a manifesto for revolt against the evils in the *imperium* and for repentance and reform among the political community of Roman Christians.

The second ending of the *Chronographia* articulated a cautionary, critical response to Leo v's turn towards an "iconoclast" view of the meaning of the past for the present. I read the new second ending as a means whereby the group which brought Leo to power—Irenic in their political commitments—then attempted to use the *Chronographia* to bring him back to their way of thinking. When Michael II came to power in 820, he managed to undo some of the disunity that Leo had wrought.[116] But it was not possible to completely restore what Leo v had destroyed, for although the military-based alliances seem to have reunited under Michael II, they seem also to have alienated the more intellectual circles around the former patriarch Nikephoros I who remained committed to an uncompromisingly iconophile position. A non-persecuting iconoclasm became the status quo, bringing a functional if not perfect peace to domestic politics.

In the chronographer's tale of the upended liturgy, above, the antagonists struggled against each other for leadership of the empire, but they agreed on the rules of the contest. They fought with the same presumptions about truth, about the divine, about power, about words, and about time. The anti-apostolic protestors had sought to summon a still-present Constantine v with the words and actions of the liturgy. The *Chronographia* performed its own historical resurrections by articulating a mastery of time that it claimed was in line with the language and practice and worship of the imperial church of Constantinople, of the "Orthodox Christians." These sides held each other in opposition, but in the end they held more in common than not. In this context it would seem that as a part of the peace under the Amorians, the *Chronographia*'s paradigm had to remain on the shelf: it was too obviously in opposition to the new emperor's policies for its backers to have any motivation to distribute it widely. But though its codices would literally have been shelved, it is clear that

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115   Papaioannou, "Byzantine Historia," 302. "Indeed, at a closer look, Byzantine historiography is marked by diverging individual choices and their remarkable variety. This may be explained by the fact that no particular institution (not even the school curriculum!) lay behind Byzantine historians. A certain level of freedom from tradition was thus encouraged by the system."

116   Signes Codoñer, *Emperor Theophilos*, 63–72.

this masterwork and its potential cultural and political power was in no way forgotten. Thirty years after it was completed a new empress would come to power. Under that empress—the great Theodora—a new political discourse developed which allowed for an overhaul of Michael II's iconoclast compromise without needing to vilify all those who had participated in his regime. In this moment the *Chronographia* made its comeback by being rewritten, once again, for yet another political moment. This rewriting resulted in either the manuscript *PG 1710* itself or the recension of which it is a copy. The next effort—to create the third end of the *Chronographia* project—is what would determine its legacy as the historical masterwork of the age.

The Past's Future: The *Chronographia* Project in the Mid-Ninth Century

The importance of the *Chronographia* can only be understood if its different ends—both its literal endings and the different purposes to which it was put— are distinguished and studied individually. So far, I have considered two different endings within the *Chronographia* as it survives today, arguing that each serves a different end. These two endings reveal how a monumental work of historical scholarship intersected with the unavoidably capricious realities of the imperial politics of its elite authors and patrons. The unique philosophical, theological, political, and historical arguments of the *Chronographia* aimed to give its audience the materials with which to make sense of their present world by re-situating that world in relation to its past and future. The history of these adaptations shows subsequent readers and editors took to heart the injunction of the *Preface* to always be alert to seeing the fulfillment of the past in the present, and to complete what was missing.

In chapter 7, I argued that the original planned ending of the project was the entry now labeled AM 6302 (AD 809/10)—the year before emperor Nikephoros I's death—and that the end, or goal, of this ending was to make a philosophical and historiographical case for supporting Arsaber the *quaestor*'s rebellion against Nikephoros I.[1] The fact that this point was made in philosophical, historiographical, even 'religious' terms does not imply that it did not have major political implications.[2] The very format of the *synkellos*'

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[1] On the first end(ing) of the *Chronographia* see chapter 7 section 7; on Arsaber and his allies see chapter 2 section 4 and chapter 8 section 1.4.

[2] The *Chronographia* exerted such power because it spoke with both ecclesial and imperial *auctoritas* in an era which integrated these spheres in the praxis of political power. See: Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and now: M. T. G. Humphreys, *Law, Power, and Imperial Ideology in the Iconoclast Era: c. 680–850*, OSB (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and Dimitris Krallis, "Historiography as Political Debate," in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniossoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 599–614. For a productive contemporary comparison, see: Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Political Discourse and the Biblical Past: Hraban, Dhuoda, Radbert," in *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Clemens Gantner,

chronography invited its audience to engage with its imperial portraits as *Kaiserkritik*, to judge emperors past and present. This first end of the *Chronographia* used an extended historical argument to win a moral victory by denigrating the policies and regime of Nikephoros I in favor of the rebels (including a *synkellos*) he had punished and banished. The *Chronographia*'s first end wrote a history of the universe which was also a manifesto claiming that the cosmos called Christians to arms against an unjust emperor. The project's first end framed the entire past to make sense of the present moment of AD 810.

However, that present moment evaporated quite quickly, and so necessitated a second ending.[3] In chapter 8, I argued that the three entries labeled AM 6303–6305 (AD 810–813) which complete the *Chronographia* as it survives today served this second end by providing a second ending. These entries were a subsequent addition, a coda written in AD 814 or 815. They were likely written by the Theophanes of the *Preface* but more importantly were written on behalf of the entire group behind the project. This group was an iconophile contingent among those who allied to bring Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820) to the throne and who suddenly found themselves at a crisis when he reverted to the iconoclast policies of his namesake, Leo III (r. 717–741). Thus, while the *Chronographia* invited its readers to take the failed revolt of AD 808 as the impetus for its creation, by the time the work began to circulate (in AD 815 at the earliest), its audience would have known the professed leader of the revolt, Arsaber the *quaestor*, as the father-in-law to the emperor Leo V. The final entries of the *Chronographia* updated the work to reflect this new context.

In this chapter I articulate a possible third end for the *Chronographia* by reading *PG 1710* as a source on its own moment of creation. To this point, I have read that manuscript as a source on the original form of the *Chronicle*.[4] Now I will study that first Greek recension of the *Chronographia* in *PG 1710* as the earliest surviving reading and adaptation of the work. I assess the recension in *PG 1710* and the other ninth-century recensions of the *Chronographia* against the context of mid-ninth-century Constantinople. In doing so, my argument for how to understand the *Chronographia*'s third end does not focus on the question of whether or in which ways the text in *PG 1710* is closer to the original version, but rather uses its early date and an undoubtedly altered passage therein to argue that a major reason for the *Chronographia*'s influence and

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Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 87–102.

3   On the second end(ing) see chapter 8 section 4.

4   See chapter 1, section 4.2.

continued popularity was the very fact that it "does not appear to have been stable in the ninth century."[5]

Of all the many differences between recensions, the single most notable textual change from the original is the re-location of an entire passage which I will call "the Papal-Carolingian excursus."[6] The version of the excursus in the Greek recensions is demonstrably an alteration to the original. I situate this alteration in the milieu of the recension of *PG 1710*, namely the reign of patriarch Methodios (AD 843 to 847). While it is certain that this excursus was a modification to the original, it is impossible to definitively prove that this alteration was introduced by the recension behind *PG 1710* in particular. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for my purposes to merely show that it is plausible if not probable that this is the case. I only demand this modest level of probability to make my main claim: the text's instability is evidence of its continued significance.

The *Chronographia* continued to be read, altered, and recopied because it continued to be seen as relevant to the politics of the Roman empire in contexts such as that which I propose below. This point stands regardless of whether or not my exact hypothesis for who re-edited the *Chronographia* in 843–847 proves reliable through the tests of time, criticism, and further reflection. What we can already know without a doubt is that the *Chronographia* project continued to matter to groups of the powerful (whether in the middle of the ninth century, the end of the ninth century, or the eleventh from whence our other manuscripts survive) and that these groups gained insight into their present by reading and editing the *Chronographia*.[7] Changes to the text are evidence for how the *Chronographia* continued to matter to and for the powerful elite of the Roman Empire. The real value in hypothesizing possible contexts for significant textual change is to open up a conversation about the unique varieties of history-writing in early and mid-ninth-century Constantinople.

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5 Cyril A. Mango and Roger D. Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lxii.

6 Federico Montinaro, "Byzantium, the Merovingians, and the Hog," in *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders et al., SEMH (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 151–58.

7 A recent argument persuasively locates the production of *Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155* by still-powerful descendants of the Empress Irene in Bithynia at the turn of the tenth century. I hold ca. 870 Constantinople a more likely milieu for the recension (if not these manuscripts), but the issue is not settled. See: Juan Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 159–76.

1   Dating the Ninth-Century Recensions of the *Chronographia*

Before comparing how the three different ninth-century recensions of the *Chronographia* present the story of the eighth-century alliance between the papacy and the Carolingian Franks—what I am calling the Papal-Carolingian excursus—I will define and date those recensions. Doing so will make it possible to propose historical contexts for where the different recensions place the excursus.

In the following discussion I label the Greek recension represented by the manuscript *PG 1710* as *Gr1*, and the Greek recension represented by the manuscripts *Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155* as *Gr2*. *Gr1* could have been produced no earlier than 843 (for reasons that we will soon see). Its script is comparable to a manuscript dated 862 giving us a plausible date range of AD 843 to ca. 862.[8] *Gr2* could not have been produced any earlier than the reign of Basil I (r. 867–886). It has also been dated as late as the early tenth century, giving us a plausible date range of AD 867 to ca. 900.[9]

I label the Latin recension *La*. The Latin recension of the *Chronographia* goes by the title of the *Historia Tripartita*, an edited translation made by Anastasius Bibliothecarius during his diplomatic mission to Constantinople in 870, of the same texts found in *Gr2*.[10] It began with a collection of chronological lists known as the *Chronographikon Syntomon* of patriarch Nikephoros I (not to be confused with his historical work the *Breviarium* or *Short History*).[11] This was followed by the *Chronicle* of George and Theophanes, though Anastasius heavily edited the *Chronicle* through the reign of Justinian I. *La* is represented by the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana's manuscript *Palatinus Latinus 826* (9th or 10th century), and the Montecassino Abbey's codex *Casinensis 6* (1058–1086).

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8   Boris L. Fonkich, "Sur la datation et les origines du manuscrit parisien de la 'Chronographie' de Théophane (cod. Paris. gr. 1710)," in *Grecheskie rukopisi evropeĭskikh sobraniĭ: paleograficheskie i kodikologicheskie issledovaniia, 1988–1998 gg.* (Moskva: Indrik, 1999), 58–61; Filippo Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane': notes paléographiques et codicologiques," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 121–47.

9   Basil I is last in a list of emperors at the beginning of *Wake Greek 5*. Nigel G. Wilson, "A Manuscript of Theophanes in Oxford," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 357–60; Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI."

10   On Anastasius' oeuvre of translations see: Bronwen Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes and Martyrs: The Political Hagiography of Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Studia Antiqua Australiensia 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

11   On the latter text, the *Short History*, see: Cyril A. Mango, *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople: Short History*, Dumbarton Oaks Texts 10, CFHB 13 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990).

I have not been able to consult the Montecassino copy, which K. de Boor considered to be the superior copy of the two.[12] Nevertheless, the copy of the *Historia Tripartita* in the Vatican manuscript is sufficient for our purposes. *Palatinus Latinus 826* is dated to the late ninth century on paleographic grounds, this early date making it likely to be a copy of Anastasius' own version.[13]

The recensions *Gr1* and perhaps *Gr2* were completed before Anastasius Bibliothecarius made the edited translation *La*. Nevertheless, excluding Anastasius' edits to the early part of the text, scholars concur that *La* was created from an earlier recension of the text than *Gr1* or *Gr2*, which share obvious evidence of adaptation.[14] This evidence was pointed out by K. de Boor in the entry under AM 6177 (AD 684/5), a passage known to Byzantinists as the "iconoclast scholium." This passage discusses the relative ecumenicity of the canons of a church council known as the Quinisext Council (held in AD 691/2) and ends with a list of patriarchs who reigned after the council. There are two versions of the list of patriarchs: one version is preserved in *La*, and the other is common to the recensions *Gr1* and *Gr2*. The list of patriarchs in *La* ends with patriarch Tarasios (d. 806). *La* therefore preserves a version compiled after AD 806, but before Nikephoros I had been deposed in AD 815 (since it does not include him in the list). On the other hand, the list of patriarchs in both *Gr1* and *Gr2* runs up to John Grammatikos (deposed in AD 843). Accordingly, *Gr1* and *Gr2* preserve an addition to the list after AD 843 but before Methodios died in AD 847 (since if his reign had been complete, he would have been added to the list).[15] These differences tell us that the surviving Greek recensions preserve a version of the *Chronographia* edited during the mid-ninth-century

12   This manuscript is not the only copy of Anastasius' translation. There seem to be many more manuscripts than had been realized (Bronwen Neil, "Theophanes the Confessor on the Arab Conquest: The Latin Version by Anastasius Bibliothecarius," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 149–58). Nevertheless, it is the earliest copy we know, and it was the base upon which K. de Boor published his critical edition in 1885. Karl de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1883–1885), dB 2:424–26.

13   De Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2:425.

14   The recent re-dating of *Gr1* noted above does not detract from the substance of the argument for why this is the case, first articulated by de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*, 2: 404–22.

15   It is true, as W. Treadgold has pointed out, that it is difficult to reconcile the fact that *Gr1* and *Gr2* states John Grammatikos was patriarch for five years and eleven months while other sources give the span of six years and one month. Nevertheless, this issue does bear upon our point. Warren T. Treadgold, "The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Chronicle' of Symeon the Logothete for the Years 813–845," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979): 178–79. See also: Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 506n8.

reign of patriarch Methodios, while *La* preserves an earlier version. *La* was translated and edited from a version of the *Chronographia* compiled between AD 808 and 815, while *Gr1* (and the unique textual changes it shares with *Gr2*) originate from a version of the *Chronographia* edited between AD 843 and 847.[16] Having established the relevant dating ranges, we can turn to the key passage in question, the Papal-Carolingian excursus.

2   The Papal-Carolingian Excursus

The Papal-Carolingian excursus is a well-known passage whose origins have recently been linked to the pro-Carolingian narrative of the *Gesta Pontificum Autissiodorensium*.[17] The excursus is placed in one location in *La* and another in *Gr1* (and *Gr2*). The different date ranges for these recensions (established in section 1) allow us to propose a historical context for the revised version of the excursus in the *Chronographia* of *Gr1* (*PG 1710*), and then to ask what parties might have cared enough about the text of the Papal-Carolingian excursus between 843 and 847 (during the patriarchate of Methodios and the joint reign of Michael III and Theodora in AD 842–857) to have moved it for that recension. The point of pursuing this question is to use the manuscript *PG 1710* as a source on the period in which its recension was produced and so propose an answer to why and how the *Chronographia* continued to matter in the world of medieval Constantinople.

The excursus begins with Pope Stephen's flight to Pippin, justifies the Carolingian coup over the Merovingians, describes Carolingian victories over the 'Umayyads of Andalusia and the Lombards of Italy, and ends with the coronation of Charlemagne. It takes a positive view of these events, framing the Papal-Carolingian alliance in terms the Carolingians would have approved, defending the alliance of Rome with Francia that developed over the course of the second half of the eighth century, from 754 to 800. The recensions of the *Chronographia* do not vary in their wording of the excursus but in the year

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16   It is not necessarily the case that the *manuscript* we have been focusing on, *PG 1710*, was composed in the small window of time between 843–847 even though it certainly could have been. Ronconi, "La première circulation de la 'Chronique de Théophane.'" I work, in what follows, with the conclusion that the *recension* of the text which is contained in the copy of the *Chronographia* that is *PG 1710* was composed while Methodios was still patriarch.

17   Montinaro, "Byzantium, the Merovingians, and the Hog."

under which each placed the passage.[18] These differing placements result in very different ideas about the connection between the imperial iconoclast policies of Leo III and Constantine V, and the empire's relations with Rome, Rome's territories, and the Carolingians.

Historians have noted that the *Chronographia* misplaces the Papal-Carolingian excursus far from both its correct date and its correct historical context. The Pope's flight actually occurred in AD 753, and the subsequent coronation of Pippin's sons in 754. In *Gr1* (and *Gr2*) the excursus is placed at the *beginning* of the entry for AM 6216 (AD 723/4). In *La* the excursus is placed much later, at the *end* of the entry for AM 6234 (AD 741/2).[19] But the most important question is not why the Papal-Carolingian excursus was misdated.[20] Instead the placements of the excursus can tell us how each version of the *Chronographia* made meaning (within the overarching narrative) out of an alliance between the Pope and the Carolingian Franks which freed the papacy from subjection to Constantinople.

Using the dates for the recensions discussed above, along with clues from the palaeography of the relevant manuscripts and the narrative context which I will discuss below, we can establish that *La* preserves the original position for the Papal-Carolingian excursus at the end of the entry for AM 6234 (AD 741/2). I will make this argument by first considering the visual, palaeographic evidence in the surviving manuscripts. This evidence provides a convincing initial case that the excursus as in *Gr1* and *Gr2* was a modification to the original text. That case is proven by turning to the relative narrative coherence of the two different placements of the excursus. In *Gr1* and *Gr2* the excursus under AM 6216 (AD 723/4) strains the narrative of that entire section of the *Chronographia*, while on the other hand *La*'s placement of the excursus coherently frames the flight of Stephen II in parallel to another rebellion under the same entry (AM 6234), that of Artabasdos against Constantine V. Thus, the

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18   Federico Montinaro has made significant headway in thinking about the meaning of these variants in relation to a subsequent Greek version in the mid-tenth-century *De Administrando Imperio* of Constantine VII. See: Federico Montinaro, "The Chronicle of Theophanes in the Indirect Tradition," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 177–206.

19   During these dates the kingdoms of the Franks were dominated by the father of Pippin, Charles Martel the *maior* of the Palace, on which see: Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (2000; repr., London: Routledge, 2013).

20   The excursus ends with the coronation of Charlemagne. The *Chronographia* did also date this event correctly with a clear second notice in the correct chronological spot: under the ninth indiction and Irene's fourth year (AM 6293 or AD 800/801) "Charlemagne, king of the Franks" was crowned on 25 December. MS 653 / dB 475.

narrative context of the placement of the excursus in the Greek recensions (*Gr1* and *Gr2*) and preserved in K. de Boor's critical edition and C. Mango and R. Scott's critical translation prove to be not only the more egregious chronological errors but also almost certainly not the original location in the overall narrative.[21] Having established these points, the concluding section of this chapter will examine what end this new placement *does* serve, hypothesizing the reasoning behind the new placement.

2.1 *The Palaeography of the Papal-Carolingian Excursus*

The palaeographic evidence supports *La* being the original placement and *Gr1* and *Gr2* being a modification. In *La* the Papal-Carolingian excursus comes as the last story under the entry for AM 6234 (figure 9.1). The excursus is introduced with the simple transition "*Inter haec aute*[*m*] *et huius* || *scemodi Stephanus papa Romanus....*"[22] Thus, *La* presents the excursus as palaeographically indistinguishable, with no unique palaeographic characteristics.

By contrast, the shifted Papal-Carolingian excursus in *Gr1* (and preserved in Gr2) disrupts the visual expectations established over the entire course of the manuscripts. The palaeography of the entry for AM 6216 highlights the
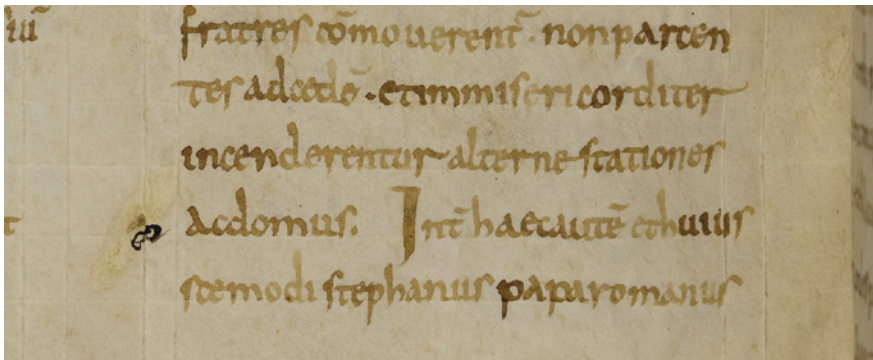
FIGURE 9.1   Vatican City, BAV, Pal. lat. 826, f. 121v column 2 detail (AM 6234)
IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTECA APOSTOLICA VATICANA

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21   Oddly, scholars have followed K. de Boor in ascribing Anastasius' version higher reliability than the Greek recensions for many divergent readings, but in the instance of this excursus, scholars have given the Greek priority (though see MS 557n2).

22   dB2 272.18.

excursus to such a degree as to make it seem as though this is the single most important entry in the entire *Chronographia*. First, in *Gr1* (represented by *PG 1710*) the entry is initiated by a majuscule header serving as a preface to the entry:

> The matters concerning the blessed Stephen Pope of Rome,
> how he both fled into Francia and was saved, I will now relate: ~[23]

After this unprecedented first-person preface, the entry itself follows suit with a second innovation. In the Greek recensions the first letter of every entry was a *littera notabilior*, usually extending into the margin so as to make that letter easily visible. Over the course of the work, in *any* Greek recension, there is only one other entry that does not begin with the letter T (both phrases used to initiate entries begin with that letter, whether "In this year …" or "In the Year of the World …").[24] However, the text of the AM 6216 entry proper begins with the word "Οὗτος" in the phrase "This celebrated man Stephen …"[25]

As figures 9.2 and 9.3 below demonstrate, this highly unusual presentation is consistent between both Greek recensions, *Gr1* and *Gr2*.
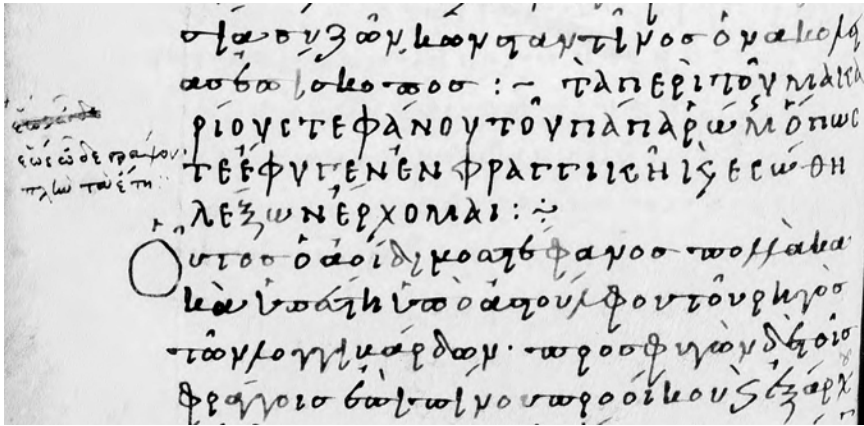
FIGURE 9.2   Paris, BnF, Grec 1710, f. 338v detail (AM 6216)
             IMAGE COURTESY OF GALLICA

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23   τὰ περὶ τοῦ μακαρίου στεφάνου τοῦ πάπα ῥώμ[η]ς || ὅπως τε ἔφυγεν ἐν φραγγικῇ κ[αὶ] ἐσώθη λέξων ἔρχομαι: ~ Greek as in the manuscripts cited; literal translation mine.

24   The one exception is AM 6033 (AD 540/1) during the reign of Justinian I. This entry is its own interesting case but does not seem to be a case of later modification. Notably, the variation there is more minor than the variation at AM 6216, simply using another annual formula: "In the fourteenth year of Justinian …". MS 319 / dB 219.

25   Οὗτος ὁ ἀοίδιμος Στεφάνου....
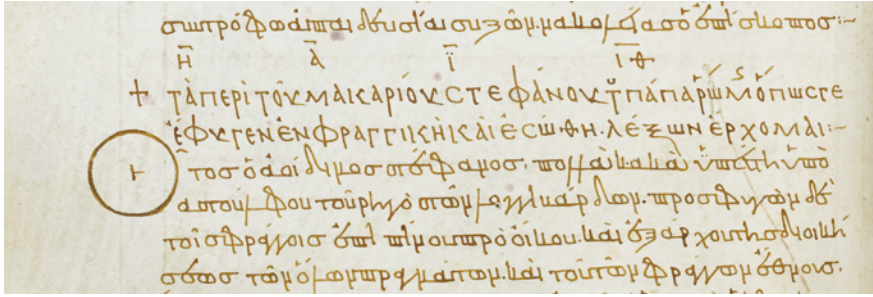
FIGURE 9.3   Oxford, Christ Church College, Wake Greek 5, f. 260v detail (AM 6216)
IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRIST CHURCH LIBRARY AND COPYRIGHT OF THE
GOVERNING BODY OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

Thus, in the Greek recensions the entry containing the excursus begins with its own unique majuscule preface, with a unique phrase, and with a different *littera notabilior* extending into the margin. The narrative of the whole *Chronographia* and this unusual palaeography indicate that this placement was a change from the original plan. This hypothesis becomes more secure when we consider the new narrative context for AM 6216 and deduce what seems to have been the logic of placing the excursus at this point.

2.2   *Context of the Excursus in the Greek and Latin Recensions*

The narrative placement of the excursus in *La*, under AM 6234, gives the passage a coherent context. The entries around AM 6234 cover the early period of the reign of Constantine V. In the portion of the entry before AM 6234, the rebel Artabasdos is contextualized and made sympathetic by portraying Constantine V as the "forerunner to the Antichrist." Though Artabasdos is a rebel against the emperor he is praised, and the entry as a whole frames both Artabasdos and Pope Stephen as conscious objectors to Constantine V's policies, practices, and general evil.[26]

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26   Paul Speck, *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lehren: Untersuchungen zur Revolte des Artabasdos und ihrer Darstellung in der byzantinischen Historiographie*, Poikila Byzantina 2 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1981). The entry for AM 6234 (AD 741/742) is the second year of the reign of Constantine V (r. 741–775). It dramatized Constantine's contest with Artabasdos as an orthodox usurper nearly wresting power away from an impious emperor. Artabasdos was routed in Asia Minor by Constantine. He fled to Constantinople, but when (under AM 6235) Constantine retook the capital, Artabasdos was forced to flee again. Artabasdos was finally captured in Asia Minor and his sons were blinded as punishment. By the end of the entry for AM 6235 Constantine V had gained unchallenged control of the empire.

As the entry moves into the excursus it makes an explicit thematic connection between the narrative of the civil war between Artabasdos and Constantine V and the story of Pope Stephen's flight: Christians were being aroused to fury and mutual slaughter.

> The Devil, instigator of evil, roused in those days such fury and mutual slaughter among Christians that sons would murder their fathers without any mercy and brothers would murder their own brothers and pitilessly burn each other's houses and homes.[27]

This transition makes Artabasdos standing up to an impious emperor the context of the story of the excursus. There Pope Stephen was "suffering many ills" at the hands of an impious ruler, the Lombard king Astulphos (Aistulf r. 749–756).[28] The difference between the two is merely that instead of engaging in armed conflict, the pope fled to a ruler who would protect him. The *Chronographia* implies the Pope was as right to flee as Artabasdos was right to revolt. Thus, in context, the version of the Papal-Carolingian excursus in *La* uses narrative framing to make the story evidence of the disaster wrought by the emperor Constantine V upon the empire: the papacy's alliance with the Franks is a consequence of Constantine V's evils.[29]

Besides providing a more coherent narrative frame, *La* does correctly place the excursus within the reign of Constantine V (rather than in the reign of Leo III). This placement also fits the historical context we already established for the original impetus of the *Chronographia*: the early ninth century faction behind the work supported Irene and her attempts to forge a marriage alliance with the Carolingians and so portrayed the Papal-Carolingian alliance positively. It seems to have done so to both provide a foil for the evils of Constantine V, and to portray Irene's marriage diplomacy with the Carolingians as a path to restoration for the empire (until thwarted by Nikephoros I). In the version of *La*, the flight of Pope Stephen to the Franks came as the culmination of gradually souring relations between the iconoclast emperors and the Roman popes, and signaled that the pope had sought a new protector only after exhausting all patience with the heretical and greedy Roman emperors. *La*'s excursus thus played a role in a narrative which

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27   MS 578 / dB 418.

28   MS 556 / dB 402.

29   Note that Pope Stephen fled before the imperial disaster that was the reign of Constantine V. Artabasdos' rebellion and Stephen's flight are the result of the "impiety" of the Roman emperor. These events signaled the dissolution of the Byzantine οἰκουμένη from within, where brothers would murder their own brothers.

demonstrated how over-weening emperors drove the pope—a reliable arbiter of orthodoxy—away from the Eastern empire and into the arms of the Franks through persistently abusive policies. *La* made the iconoclast controversy the fault of the emperors, a story well in line with everything we have shown about the work's narrative agenda. The version in *La* also coherently connects with the role of the papacy and the Carolingians in the reign of Irene, where these entities offered support for a return to orthodox doctrine and a potential marriage alliance whereby to restore the ancient empire by reuniting East and West. As far as we can tell, this potential alliance was in fact a real possibility from the 780s into the ninth century but would not materialize again.[30] As T. S. Brown has put it, "as a result of the events of 800, Rome burnt its boats with the Byzantine empire on a political level."[31] All of this accords with the point established in chapter 6, that the original pro-Irene faction behind the *Chronographia* had an interest in presenting the Carolingians as the political saviors of the empire and the Pope as a reliable guardian of orthodoxy.

Conversely, it is impossible to read the Papal-Carolingian excursus in *Gr1* and *Gr2* as anything but a narrative interruption. Its placement right in the middle of the build-up to Leo III's iconoclasm interjects an entirely new topic. It creates additional confusion by not explaining what happened to Pope Stephen after telling the story of his reign, for the next entry begins with another pope entirely (Gregory III). Nevertheless, it is also possible to see a logic and thus an intentionality in this altered placement. The entries preceding AM 6216 provide a narrative of the early reign of Leo. In the early period of Leo III's reign (from AM 6210) he was described as "the pious Emperor."[32] As his story developed, Leo "became responsible for inflicting many evils upon

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30   See: Michael McCormick, "Western Approaches (700–900)," in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500–1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 415–17. A formal agreement for Irene's son Constantine VI and Charlemagne's daughter Rotrud to marry was concluded in Rome in 781. To prepare for Rotrud's move, the eunuch Elissaios was sent to Charlemagne's court. The 787 Council of Constantinople and the Carolingian response at Frankfurt in 794 soured relations, but after the turn of the century rapprochement was restored and Charlemagne's title of βασιλέυς was recognized for a time.

31   Thomas S. Brown, "Byzantine Italy: 680–876," in Shepard, *Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*, 447. See now: Clemens Gantner, "New Visions of Community in Ninth-Century Rome: The Impact of the Saracen Threat on the Papal World View," in *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100*, ed. Walter Pohl, Richard Payne, and Clemens Gantner (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 403–21.

32   MS 545 / dB 396 (AM 6209 [AD 716/717]).

us"[33] and then suddenly was given the exact opposite label: "the impious emperor."[34] Leo's change began when in the entry for AM 6215, a "Jewish magician" persuaded the 'Ummayad Izid (Yazīd II) to "destroy the holy icons that were venerated in Christian churches throughout his dominions."[35] The caliph's sudden death that year spared his subjects the effects of his decision, but the *Chronographia* made the story an explicit foreshadowing of how the Romans would suffer under Leo III's adoption of the same policies:

> The emperor Leo partook of the same error, a grievous and illicit one, and so became responsible for inflicting many evils upon us.[36]

But *Gr1* and *Gr2* inserted the Papal-Carolingian excursus before this prophecy about Leo could be fulfilled, and just after the entry noting Yazīd II ("Izid")'s declaration for iconoclasm. In this context the Papal exit from the Byzantine diaspora reads as a narrative *non sequitur*.[37]

What were the editors of *Gr1* meaning by an emphatic insistence that the Pope abandoned the Empire right at *this* moment? The entries following AM 6216 offer clues.[38] AM 6217 (AD 724/5) returns to the narrative throughline that had begun in AM 6215, as Leo III's iconoclasm led to tangible consequences from Pope Gregory III.[39]

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33   MS 555 / dB 402.

34   MS 558 / dB 404.

35   Specifically, on the occasion of the baptism of his son Constantine who would become Constantine V, the "forerunner to the Antichrist." MS 551 / dB 400 (AM 6211 [AD 718/719]).

36   MS 555 / dB 402 (AM 6215 [AD 722/723]).

37   Sandwiched between the excursus and an unnecessary recapitulation of the excursus ("Stephen, the Pope of Rome, sought refuge with the Franks," Στέφανος δέ, ὁ πάπας Ῥώμης, προσέφυγεν εἰς τοὺς Φράγγους, at MS 557 / dB 403) it is stated that Hisham ("Isam") succeeded to Yazīd II (Izid) and then successfully initiated both building and military campaigns. This preserves the original, continuing narrative of iconoclasm in Syria. A further *non sequitur*: in the entry following, AM 6217, Pope Gregory III (r. 731–741) arrives without any explanation as to how (according to AM 6216) Stephen would spend years working with the Carolingians when (according to AM 6217) Gregory had just taken over the office. The attentive reader is left to guess what became of Pope Stephen in Francia, and where Pope Gregory III fit into the story that led up to Charlemagne's coronation in AD 800.

38   These following entries are of course common to both *Gr1, Gr2*, and also *La*.

39   There are several notable issues here. First, as C. Mango, R. Scott, and others have pointed out, there are problems with the chronology of the events listed. Based on evidence internal to letters written by Gregory III *to* Leo III (which do survive), the letters to Gregory *from* Leo III cannot have been written earlier than AD 732. Furthermore, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*' account of the *Life* of Gregory II (r. 715–731), that pope withheld the taxes *before* the arrival of the imperial decrees of Leo III.

> The emperor Leo started … making pronouncements about the removal
> of the holy and venerable icons. When Gregory, the Pope of Rome, had
> been informed of this, he withheld the taxes of Italy and of Rome and
> wrote to Leo a doctrinal letter to the effect that the emperor ought not
> to make pronouncements concerning the faith nor to alter the ancient
> doctrines of the Church which had been defined by the holy Fathers.[40]

This entry also rearranged known historical events in order to place the with-
holding of Roman and Italian taxation in direct connection to the imperial
declarations against icons. Leo III's new imperial policy led pope Gregory to
correct the emperor by withholding tax payments.[41] This does not seem to
have been the historical reality, but the argument certainly fits the overall
agenda of the *Chronographia.*

The following entry for AM 6218 (AD 725/6) begins by describing the erup-
tion of the volcanic island of Thera, and then moves on to the famous action
of Leo III to take down the icon above the *Chalke* gate to the palace. Historians
do not take this (perhaps entirely fabricated) action as the actual beginning
of iconoclasm. We now instead place that event at Leo's already-mentioned
declarations.[42] Nevertheless, in the *Chronographia*'s narrative this is clearly
an important moment for the advent of iconoclasm.[43] In that narrative, the
Chalke icon's removal is the moment imperial command became imperial

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40   MS 558 / dB 404.

41   In the discussion of the relations between Leo III and Gregory III, the text makes no refer-
      ence to the story of Pope Stephen that had just preceded. That is, as the narrative appears
      in *Gr1* and *Gr2* there is no transition whatsoever between Pope Stephen's extended
      appearance at the end of AM 6216 and the election of his successor, Gregory, in the very
      next entry. Pope Stephen did not actually reign as Pope before Gregory, but years later,
      from AD 752 to 757.

42   The current consensus among historians is that this story of the Chalke icon is in fact a
      fabrication of the turn of the ninth century when the *Chronographia* was written. See:
      Leslie Brubaker and John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850: A History*
      (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 128–35; and Marie-France Auzépy,
      "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: propaganda ou réalité?"
      Byzantion 40 (1990), 445–92.

43   Note that the entry for AM 6218 covers two indiction years (Mango and Scott, *Chronicle
      of Theophanes Confessor*, 561n2). Furthermore, note that neither of the earliest Greek
      manuscripts actually date these events to the *annus mundi* or Year of the Incarnation
      (i.e., AD). The early rubricated Greek manuscripts (*Wake Greek 5* and *VG 155*) use the
      tenth year of the emperor Leo III to date the entry. The non-rubricated Greek manuscript
      (*PG 1710*) heads the entry with the formulaic phrase "In this year." This leads to a subtle but
      nonetheless interesting point. The event that the *Chronicle* proposes as the beginning of
      iconoclasm is dated by the "ninth indiction" rather than by the year of the world or of the
      incarnation. By dating the event to the indiction cycle over the course of Leo III's reign

action. The official policy of iconoclasm is recounted as immediately instigating actual violation of sacred objects as Leo III engaged in a war on icons, "filled with boorishness and complete ignorance," extinguishing "the pious education that had lasted from St. Constantine the Great," and above all showing himself to be "Saracen-minded" and a follower of "his mentors, the Arabs."[44]

In its new location the excursus disrupted this narrative. Rather than accepting that imperial Roman deviousness was to blame for the rise of the iconoclast heresy, the new placement set the Papal-Carolingian excursus right before the emperors had over-taxed Italy or proposed iconoclasm. This implied the popes had betrayed the Roman empire without cause, proposing there was a causal relationship between the Pope breaking with Constantinople and Constantinople's subsequent turn to iconoclasm. In this context, Leo III's iconoclasm reads as an ill-advised response to the Pope's move to disintegrate the empire, fleeing the empire rather than helping to reform and so preserve it. The Greek recensions thus blamed the bishop of Rome for first upsetting the world order by forging an alliance with the upstart emperors of the Carolingian dynasty and so inciting the emperors' subsequent slide into iconoclasm. Though this new story resulted in a poorly crafted narrative, it nevertheless had clear political implications.

As demonstrated in the Introduction, the *Chronographia* promised accuracy (ἀκριβεία) in the sense of reliably showing the significance of events. The real issue in locating the Papal-Carolingian excursus was more germane than an accurate date: was it the Pope or Leo III who was to blame for the controversy over icons? Both versions of the *Chronographia* framed the advent of iconoclasm *vis à vis* the empire's changing relations with the papacy. The context for both stories was bad rulership.

The portion of the *Chronographia* surrounding the entry for AM 6216 was originally crafted to build up an account of the introduction of iconoclasm by Leo III. That is, these same entries in *La* (i.e., without the interjection of the story of Pope Stephen) have a coherent narrative progression which use Yazīd II's iconoclasm, his death just after issuing iconoclast edicts, and the succession of Isam after him to set up Leo's declaration for iconoclasm and the unfortunate contrast of his successfully passing on his policy to his son and successor Constantine V. This sequence as in *La* is a clean narrative progression. It does

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the chronographers indicate they thought of this event in terms of when it occurred in the emperor Leo's reign: in a relative, rather than a universal, chronology.

44   MS 559–61 / dB 405–6. The narrative sequence through these entries in *La* clarifies the origins of iconoclasm by maintaining a narrative focus on how the idea of iconoclasm spread like some sort of epidemic.

not jump back and forth to tell the reader that Pope Stephen had allied himself with the Franks, tell the reader about Isam's succession, and then remind the reader of Pope Stephen a second time at the entry's end.

On the other hand, while the Papal-Carolingian excursus in *Gr1* is a narrative disruption not incorporated into the surrounding narrative in any way (and thus clearly not original), it is visually emphasized. As such its placement in the narrative about the origins of iconoclasm, however jarring, implies that the popes were to blame for Leo III turning to iconoclasm. Leo III's iconoclasm reads as a kind of desperate measure to reinstate God's favor. Both places for the Papal-Carolingian excursus are—strictly speaking—chronological errors, for the starting events in the Papal-Carolingian excursus occurred in 752–754 rather than in 722 (*Gr1*) or 742 (*La*). The difference is whether the flight of Pope Stephen in the excursus revealed how bad things had become in the Roman Empire (the version in *La*), or whether Pope Stephen's flight was partly responsible for the Romans' errors (the version of *Gr1*). The placement of the excursus at the beginning of AM 6216 in *Gr1* was meant to catch the reader's attention and set the passage apart. Thus, it is clear that either at or by the date range established for *Gr1* (AD 843–847), the *Chronographia* was explicitly and intentionally modified to make this entry stand out. Visual and narrative oddities indicate this intervention altered the sequence of events in an effort not to correct a date but to correct a narrative. The placement of the excursus in *Gr1* and *Gr2* is thus non-original, and also intentional. Placing the Papal-Carolingian excursus under AM 6216 rather than 6234 was a meaning-bearing intervention in the textual tradition made in ca. AD 843–847. Having established this point, we are left with the questions of why and for whom was this intervention made. Though ultimately unknowable, the argument that follows sketches out a contemporary agenda that would align with this change to the text.

3   The *Chronographia* and the Triumph of Orthodoxy: AD 843–847

A probable explanation for the changed placement of the Papal-Carolingian excursus in the first Greek recension of the *Chronographia* edited between AD 843–847 is to be found not in foreign affairs (diplomatic relations between Constantinople, the Carolingians, and the Papacy) but in domestic politics, in the agendas of the regency of the empress Theodora and the patriarch Methodios.[45] The domestic politics of the years just after 843 offer us several

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45   While it is true that "on an ecclesiastical level, relations with Byzantium were strained by the second wave of iconoclasm in the east (815–843), and even after the restoration

plausible if not probable options for Constantinopolitans who would want to shift blame for iconoclasm from the Roman emperors to the Pope or Carolingians. The interests of editors and audience which are implied by the alterations would support the regency of Theodora and Methodios, pushing an agenda of the regency in the wake of the 843 Council in multiple important ways.

3.1   *Theodora, Methodios, and the Greek Recension of the* Chronographia

First, there is the broad alignment of the *Chronographia*'s narrative with women in power. Chapter 7 established that the *Chronographia* as a whole promoted the legitimate moral and imperial authority of the empress Irene. Furthermore, the parallels in the circumstances through which Irene and Theodora came to power are strikingly similar. Both married into a nominally iconoclast regime. Whether by personal conviction, practical political instinct, or both, each forged a new idiom for authority by departing from the policies of their dead husbands but did so without demonizing their memories. And, both reigned as regents for underage sons, relying on brilliantly strategized alliances with the ecclesiastical hierarchy to maintain their moral authority and political capital.

Irene's positive portrait in the *Chronographia* is thus a perfect model for Theodora's claim to power and provides a type for Theodora to act as empress regent.[46] If Irene had blinded her son and yet could be portrayed as fully legitimate, the question of Theodora's power over her son in and of itself would raise no objections. Theodora's regency began in AD 842 and ended in 856/7. And, indeed, AD 856–857 would see Theodora accept the transition to Michael's rule of the empire along with his uncle Bardas (Theodora's brother) the *kaisar*. Rather than reclaiming power, when Michael III forced his mother Theodora and his sisters into monastic retirement at the Monastery

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of icons, contentious issues remained," neither can it be said that relations between Constantinople and either Rome or Francia were disastrous in the 830s and 840s (Brown, "Byzantine Italy: 680–876," 448). There was in fact a fairly urgent need for rapprochement after the Aghlabid occupation of Bari and sack of St. Peter's Basilica in 846, and their sack of Ostia in 849. "In many respects, Rome remained within the Byzantine cultural orbit." There were, for instance, frequent embassies from Theophilos to negotiate military support from the Franks and we have evidence of such embassies during and leading up to the period of the first Greek recension of the *Chronographia*: 833, 839, and the early 840s. McCormick, "Western Approaches (700–900)," 418.

46   The *Chronographia* would go on to have an afterlife in other such contexts. Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI."

τῶν Γαστρίων, the empress peacefully acquiesced.[47] In this way, Theodora would provide a fulfillment of the type established by Irene's image in the *Chronographia*.

Second, the 843 Council, known as the Triumph of Orthodoxy, is specifically relevant to the new placement of the Papal-Carolingian excursus. This council negotiated the end of the imperial policy of iconoclasm, the deposition of the iconoclast patriarch John Grammatikos, and the ascension of patriarch Methodios. In order for these transitions to succeed, the council needed a narrative explaining the iconoclast period. The most sensitive topic was the involvement of the emperors—specifically the just-deceased Theophilos. Theodora pushed an agenda of both supporting the use of icons in worship and at the same time preserving the legacy of the deceased emperor from responsibility for the iconoclasm she now opposed.[48]

In the excursus we found that the key issue was not rapprochement with the Romans but someone to blame for iconoclasm. Theodora similarly sought to distance her regime from a period of rule by iconoclasts without disparaging

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47   When empress Theodora's brother Bardas deposed her as regent in 856, she was removed to the Monastery "of the Vases" (in the same Stoudios region of Constantinople as St. John's) with her daughters Thekla, Anna, Anastasia and Pulcheria: Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204* (London: Routledge, 2011), 105. The monastery was supposedly founded when Helena returned from Jerusalem, entered the City at this point and left "vases" with herbs from the Holy Land. The nunnery was first mentioned at the beginning of the ninth century (Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls: Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17 Jh.* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1977), 194. Raymond Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, part 1, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriacat oecuménique*, vol. 3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1969), 72 notes the monastery *Ta Gastria* was founded when Theoktiste (mother of Theodora) bought a house in the quarter of Psamathia from the Patrician Niketas (possibly Saint Nicetas the Patrician)). According to *De Ceremoniis*, the church of the nunnery was also a mausoleum for the members of Theodora's family for the Empress, her brother Petronas, her mother and her three daughters were all buried there, and a mandible of Bardas was also kept in a marble casket in the church (Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin*, 73). The relics of St. Euphemia and Saint Eudokia were venerated here which keeps the association of the *Chronographia* with St. Euphemia alive.

48   That there was a need for a new history of the world to take account of the new world paradigm after the Triumph of Orthodoxy is proven by the existence of the *Chronographia* of George the Monk (or *Hamartolos*, the sinner, as he refers to himself). Though likely written in the 850s, the text brings the chronology of the universe up to 842, its turning point for the present age. What was not yet entirely clear to George was how to frame what came afterwards. Based on the number of manuscripts to survive, it seems that George's *Chronographia* was popular; but while it has an iconophile agenda in line with the Triumph of Orthodoxy, it was much too critical of the emperor Theophilos to fit with the needs of Theodora as regent during her son Michael's minority.

the entire Amorion dynasty.[49] Though Leo V was murdered by Michael II (the founder of the Amorian dynasty to which Theodora was heir), the Amorians ruled with the support of the factions that had brought Leo V to power.[50] Theodora insisted that the memory of her late husband not be disparaged in the council's proceedings or conclusions.[51] Theodora needed to maintain a positive image of the emperor Theophilos, for her claim to the throne relied on him.[52] Nevertheless, she needed to distance herself from his iconoclast policy. It was thus that "the name of emperor Theophilos was omitted" in the synodal decrees of the 843 Triumph "to avoid stigmatising the family that was still in power, as well as to avoid alienating those who held his memory in honour" and so preserve Theophilos as a good and just emperor.[53]

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49   As L. Brubaker and J. Haldon remind us, there is "no evidence that Theodora wanted to re-establish image veneration out of purely pious sentiments." Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 447–52. "[Theodora], the *magistros* Theoktistos, her brothers Bardas and Petronas, along with several other high-ranking political and military men—seem to have played equally important roles. We should recall that Theoktistos and others had been staunch supporters of Theophilos' iconoclasm until his death." Furthermore, "There appears to have been no openly iconoclastic opposition to the move: clearly, it was inspired largely by matters of convenience in terms of removing a cause of internal dissension and factionalism within the dominant elite, and between the official church and the various individual opponents who continued, if not very effectively, to voice their opposition, although the genuine faith in the theological basis for images was an equally crucial element," p. 448. Indeed, scholars now doubt whether Theodora really was a secretive die-hard iconophile (as the legends hold) while Theophilos was reigning. Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "Icon Veneration: Significance of the Restoration of Orthodoxy?," in *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck; 19 December 1999*, ed. Claudia Sode and Sarolta Takács (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 181–82; Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 398. And Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "Methodios and His Synod," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies: Papers from the Thirty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Durham, 23–25 March 2002*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Andrew Louth, PSPBS 12 (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2006), 55–74. Beate Zielke, "Methodios I. (843–847)," in *Die Patriarchen der ikonoklastischen Zeit: Germanos I.–Methodios I. (715–847)*, ed. Ralph-Johannes Lilie, BBS 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999), 213–30.

50   Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium During the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, BBOS 13 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 63–72.

51   See Karlin-Hayter, "Icon Veneration," 181, where it is noted that this is attested in several sources including Genesios, Theophanes Continuatus, and Ps.-Symeon.

52   "The well-established tradition recounting Theodora's demand that her husband be pardoned also suggests that she would not have supported the re-establishment of the veneration of images had this not been agreed." Discussion in Karlin-Hayter, "Icon Veneration," e.g., p. 181.

53   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 449.

Chapter 8 argued that the final entries to the work were most likely added with the knowledge that Leo V was strongly considering iconoclasm, and that these entries portrayed Leo V on the brink of following the model of Leo III: an emperor who could be called "pious" but who was then deceived into following iconoclasm. This established the type of an emperor who could be criticized without being completely demonized. Promoting the possibility of viewing an iconoclast emperor in this way perfectly fit Theodora's established interest of not castigating her deceased husband Theophilos and the other Amorian and Armenian rulers of the Second Iconoclast Period, even as she orchestrated the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

Furthermore, the empress Theodora had something specific to gain out of the new placement of the Papal-Carolingian excursus and the recirculation of the *Chronographia*. The empress needed someone to blame for iconoclasm other than the just-deceased iconoclast emperor. The altered Papal-Carolingian excursus shifted that blame not only away from the Amorion dynasty but away from the Roman emperors altogether by putting the blame on the Papacy.

Third, Theodora's concerns for the legacy of Theophilos is not the only issue of historical ideology at stake for the new regency in the post-843 era. The other key member of the ruling group, the new patriarch Methodios, was also treading into dangerous territory. In fact, the concern of the 843 council was as much about a statement in favor of icons as it was about electing a patriarch to succeed the just-deposed but still powerful John Grammatikos. Not only are the divisions which Methodios' election exposed relevant to the *Chronographia*, but he is personally connected to the text through the fact that he composed a *Life* of the purported author, Theophanes the Confessor.[54]

This tension is further exemplified by the fact that the 843 synod (convened in early March) was held at the Blachernai palace, a location which "surely suggests that the clergy of the patriarchal church were resistant to the proposed changes."[55] Iconoclasm had been imperially sanctioned policy for decades. Thus, though the circle around Theodora and her monastic supporters worked to get rid of iconoclast clergy, removing all those who had

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54   Zielke, "Methodios I. (843–847)," 216–30; Basilius Latyšev, "Methodii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani: Vita S. Theophanis Confessoris e Codice Mosquensi n. 159," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences de Russie. Ser. 8: Classe Historico-Philologique* 13, no. 4 (1918): 1–40.

55   Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 449. For, "a meeting with such crucial implications for the whole imperial church and claiming imperial and synodal authority to exclude them is odd, to say the least."

supported the policy meant there was a clergy shortage in the capital.[56] To bring about Methodios' election the council ended up excluding a great many of the patriarchal clergy.[57]

Methodios' patriarchate was beset not only by the ousted iconoclast supporters in the patriarchate of the deposed John Grammatikos, but also by the iconophile monks of St. John in Stoudios.[58] And, we have seen that the Stoudite monastic community had been singled out for blame in the *Chronographia*. They were accused of unnecessarily causing disunity due to intransigence in the election of patriarch Nikephoros I (r. 806–815).[59] Stoudite opposition to Methodios' election was based on similar grounds. Thus the *Chronographia*'s opposition to *both* iconoclasm, *and* the Stoudites in its defense of the election of Nikephoros I offered an implicit defense for Methodios' situation in 843.[60]

3.2   *The Greek Recension and the Monks of Constantinople*

The revisions to the *Chronographia* in the first Greek recension of 843–847 seem to fit aspects of both Theodora's and Methodios' positions. On the one hand I have not uncovered close enough of an association with either of these lords to assert something like direct patronage. On the other, the just-mentioned monastic communities of the capital were *the* resource out of which Theodora and Methodios rebuilt the urban clergy and bureaucracy.[61]

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56   Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 392; Cyril A. Mango, "The Liquidation of Iconoclasm and the Patriarch Photios," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. Judith Herrin and Anthony Bryer (Birmingham: Centre for Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, 1977), 133–41; Dmitry E. Afinogenov, "The Great Purge of 843: A Re-Examination," in *Leimon: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Jan Olof Rosenqvist, AUU SBU 6 (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell, 1996), 79–91.

57   For a narrative of the synod and a discussion of the relevant sources see: Zielke, "Methodios I. (843–847)," especially pp. 216–30.

58   The issue raised by the Stoudite monks was the "nature of his election, by imperial mandate and without a democratic synodal decision." Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era* c. *680–850*, 450.

59   Paul J. Alexander, *Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1958).

60   A remaining issue to consider: the important change in the text that we have described is completely at odds with noted agendas of the new patriarch who worked to cultivate a positive image of Rome. John Osborne, "Rome and Constantinople in the Ninth Century," in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas c. 500–1400*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, and Claudia Bolgia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 224.

61   P. Hatlie has pointed out that "all of this activity leaves the strong impression that the new patriarch [Methodios] drew readily upon the monastic ranks to fill his post-Iconoclast ecclesiastical vacancies." Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 392.

These monastic communities, now committed to supporting the agenda and ideologies of Theodora and Methodius' regime, provide us with some specific and viable options for patronage of the new edition of the *Chronographia*.

We can presume that, as in virtually every known early medieval monastic community in both East and West, the monastic leaders were aristocrats with deep connections to the secular elite.[62] Theodora and Methodios did not promote a wave of "new men" so much as shift the preference from one network within the factions of the elite to another. One example can illustrate the complexity which Theodora and Methodius faced in seeking to reconstitute the elite of Constantinople with allies and also leads us to a specific connection between these "new men" and the *Chronographia*'s new recension. Euphrosyne was considered a saint of the iconophile resistance and was also directly connected to elites involved not only in the *new* factions favored at the Triumph of Orthodoxy, but the ostensible *personae non gratae*, the *old* guard of the Armenian-Amorian dynasty.[63] Euphrosyne's father Leo Skleros "may well have been sent into exile" ca. 808–812 during the reign of Nikephoros, making him a possible collaborator with the faction behind Arsaber's rebellion.[64] Then, Euphrosyne's family seems to have—like that of Arsaber—risen with the alliances that brought Leo V to the throne. Euphrosyne was related by marriage to Michael II,[65] and her mother Irene was both a daughter of Bardanes Tourkos and a cousin of Leo V.[66]

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62 Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000*, CSMLT IV.47 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and Hans J. Hummer, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000*, CSMLT IV.65 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

63 *PBE I*: "Euphrosyne 4." The following bibliographic sketch draws upon Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 265–67. Euphrosyne's family was directly connected to the Armenian-Amorian factions that had been ruling the empire since the accession of Leo V in 813. Her father Leo Skleros' name associates him with the Armenian factions in Constantinople, and his career with those who had come to power through the military. Between ca. 800–817 Leo was made a *patrikios* (a senatorial rank) and served as *strategos* in both Greece and Asia Minor. See: *PBE I*: "Leo 17".

64 Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 266.

65 Whose first wife had been Thekla, Euphrosyne's aunt.

66 *PBE I*: "Eirene 17" and "Anonymous 582." Leo V was the son of one Bardas, the brother of Bardanes Tourkos; with Euphrosyne's mother Irene being the daughter of Bardanes Tourkos, this means Irene and Leo V were cousins. The connection through Bardanes Tourkos was actually twofold for Leo V married a woman called "Barka" who was another daughter of Bardanes Tourkos and thus a sister to Euphrosyne's mother Irene. Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 266. See: *PBE I* "Barka 1," "Bardanes 3," "Leo 15," "Michael 10." For all of this see: David Turner, "The Origins and Accession of Leo V (813–820)," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40 (1990): 181–86, 202.

Like the family of Arsaber, Euphrosyne's family was closely connected to the emperor who instituted the second phase of iconoclasm, and like Arsaber's her family had also made a name for themselves by standing *against* iconoclasm.[67] Euphrosyne's familial and spiritual networks not only crossed the iconoclast-iconophile divide, but the post-843 divide between the iconophile Stoudites and the iconophile empress and patriarch. We know that Euphrosyne supported one of the empress Theodora's most important allies: Michael the *synkellos* whom the empress Theodora had appointed as one of two monks to be her *synkelloi* for Methodios.[68] This was understood as a part of Theodora's effort to surround herself with experienced and powerful advisors beyond the patriarch Methodios and the *magistros* Theoktistos.[69]

I now turn to Theodora's *synkelloi* Michael and Symeon. As we saw in chapter 2, these two would have immediately been very influential officials in their own right. But Theodora augmented their influential positions with power that *synkelloi* do not seem to have previously held. Upon their appointments, Theodora awarded her new *synkelloi* the abbacies of powerful monastic houses in Constantinople, suggesting that their appointments were part of

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67   Irene and Euphrosyne joined the *Kloubiou* monastery in Constantinople and embedded themselves in the networks of the most influential iconophile leaders. Janin thinks this monastery is outside the city in the Hebdomon area. Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire Byzantin*, 282. Another daughter (unnamed) of Irene (Euphrosyne's sister) retired at this time to Leonton. Presumably both institutions were family properties. See: Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 266. Surviving letters attest that when Euphrosyne succeeded as abbess after her mother's death in 823, she maintained direct contact with Ioannikios in Bithynia and Theodore Studites. One joint letter; eight to Irene; nine to Euphrosyne. Jason Adashinskaya et al., "English Translation of the Letters of Theodore the Stoudite to Eirene the Patrician," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 21 (2015): 162–76; Alexander Riehle, "Theodore the Stoudite and His Letters to Eirene the Patrician: An Introductory Essay," *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 21 (2015): 154–61.

68   The connection between Euphrosyne and Michael *synkellos* is testified through a notification in the *Life of Michael the Synkellos* (*Vita Michaelis Syncelli* [*BHG 1296*]) stating that he received help and comfort from Euphrosyne when he was being persecuted by Theophilos in the 830s. Mary Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, BBTT 1 (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, Dept. of Greek & Latin, Queen's University of Belfast, 1991), 74.9–20 (section 16). The regency's association with the powerful Chora monastery centered on the person of Michael the *synkellos* who came to Constantinople in 813, right in the midst of Leo v's iconoclast council discussed in chapter 8. If George the Synkellos is to be associated with any "Syrian" faction in the capital, it is sure that Michael would have been connected with the same set.

69   Note the discussion of the "problem" of having two *synkelloi* at this time in Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Notes on the Correspondence of Theodore the Studite," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 53 (1995): 153–54. We saw in chapter 2, however, that having two *synkelloi* of Constantinople seems rather to have been the standard at this time.

her plan to not only ensure relations with patriarch Methodios but to counter opposition from the Stoudite monastic network with a monastic network of her own.[70]

Of Theodora's new *synkelloi*, Michael was the more important. Michael had impeccable "iconophile" credentials but he was also ultimately an outsider, making Theodora the center of his network of influence.[71] Michael was in Constantinople because, as *synkellos* of Jerusalem, he had been sent to be the ambassador for Jerusalem's patriarch on a diplomatic mission to Rome but was delayed *en route* while in Constantinople, from where he never left.[72] Michael's surviving *Vita* claims that prior to his appointment as *synkellos* either the regents Theoktistos and Theodora, or the members of the synod of 843 actually wanted to elect him as patriarch.[73] When the empress Theodora failed to convince Michael to accept the patriarchal office, she settled for making him *synkellos*, which he accepted "by command of the orthodox emperors [Theodora and Michael III]."[74] Michael's appointment as *synkellos* was not, of course, a humble degradation but an election to a very powerful and influential office which we have seen was, although not as powerful as the patriarch, still the second most powerful ecclesiastical appointment an emperor could make. Michael and his co-*synkellos* Symeon would have been close to

70   Theodore of Stoudios had died by this time. The monks of the Stoudite faction were led at this time by Naukratios and Athanasios. As for the new *synkelloi*, Symeon would be the *hegoumenos* of Sergios and Bacchos, Michael of St. Savior in Chora. Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 104.21–32 (section 27). Douglas Domingo-Forasté, "Life of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images: Eight Saint's Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, BSLT 2 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998), 225 (section 30).

71   Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 267–69.

72   When Michael's father died, he had entered the Great Laura of St. Sabas where he lived as a cenobite from 786 to 800. He was then blessed to live as a hermit from 800 to 811. At the age of 50, he was appointed *synkellos* of Jerusalem where he served from 811 to 813. With the brother monks Theodore and Theophanes (known as the *graptoi* brothers), Michael arrived in Constantinople as ambassador for his patriarch in 814–815: the very years when Leo V was deciding for iconoclasm and when I have argued that the *Chronographia* was being completed. Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 62.1–72.17 (sections 9–15).

73   In section 25 in the *Life*, the text simply states "they all" wanted him as patriarch since he had served as *synkellos* in Jerusalem and had suffered for the faith. Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 102.14–18 (section 25).

74   Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 104.21–31 (section 27). Interestingly, this appointment is the only historical instance in which we can be sure of the identity of both new *synkelloi*; an anonymous *Vita* of three saints—David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos—states that at the elevation of Methodios to the patriarchal throne, one of these three, Symeon, was also appointed a *synkellos*. Domingo-Forasté, "Life of Sts. David, Symeon, and George of Lesbos," 225, with n409.

the empress' counsels, ranking among a mere half dozen elites with the privilege of dining regularly at the imperial table with the patriarch Methodios and the *magistros* Theoktistos.[75] When Michael first arrived in Constantinople in 814–815 he had initially lived in the Chora monastery, the same institution over which Theodora would make him *hegoumenos* in 843 (at which time Michael would have been 82 years old).[76] He served as *synkellos* and abbot of St. Savior in Chora until 846 when he died. Not only was Michael the *hegoumenos* over this monastic community, but from 843 the *synkellos* of Constantinople was the leader of *all* the monastic *hegoumenoi* of the City.[77]

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75   We can also point to empress Theodora's appointment of *synkelloi* in the context of a mid-ninth-century cleansing of the patriarchate to make way for a shift in imperial policy. See Cunningham, *Life of Michael the Synkellos*, 102.14–18 (section 25) and 104 21–31 (section 27).

76   In Constantinople, Michael became immediately involved in the renewed dispute over the use of icons. When the emperor declared for iconoclasm, Michael was removed from St. Savior in Chora, separated from the *graptoi* brothers, and imprisoned in the capital from 815 to 820. He lived under house arrest in Bithynia from about 820 to 834, and then returned to Constantinople where he was imprisoned until 842.

77   Historically the eleventh-century pattern of dual appointments as *synkellos* and *hegoumenos* seems to have originated from the political exigencies of imperial policy during the "Second Iconoclastic Period" of the ninth century. By the eleventh century the combination was somewhat unremarkable: at this time, it seems to have actually been more significant to be the *hegoumenos* than the *synkellos*. Nevertheless, in the ninth-century imperial context from which the tradition of dual appointments originated, this combination would have made the *synkelloi* of Constantinople uniquely formidable power brokers within the capital. Evidence for how imperial control over the *synkelloi* came to be related to leading the imperial monasteries—and how this development subsequently established the eleventh century pattern—comes from the aforementioned *Life of Michael the Synkellos*. At the same time Michael the Synkellos was appointed *synkellos* to patriarch Methodios, he was also made *hegoumenos* (abbot) of the very important suburban Chora monastery. Among the significant imperial monasteries, the most prominent at this time were the Chora, the Sergios and Bacchos, and the Philippikou. See: Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 335, especially n78. Both the Chora, and Sts. Sergios and Bacchos were imperial monasteries whose properties and *hegoumenos* were completely subject to imperial control. The career of the patriarch before Methodios, John VII Grammatikos, had followed the same path. When John had been appointed *synkellos* in 829 he was also made *hegoumenos* of the monastery of Sts. Sergios and Bacchos, located immediately outside the imperial palace walls to the south of the Hippodrome. See: *PmbZ* no. 3199. Thus, in the cases of Michael Synkellos and John Grammatikos, the interests of emperor and patriarch were aligned: the appointment of these *synkelloi* seems to have been a means to reinforce and implement religious policy as decreed by the palace. P. Hatlie describes imperial monasteries as "more or less absolutely subject to imperial control," since "their properties were freely transferable in accordance with imperial wishes." The Stoudios monastery was an exception to this statement. In terms of institutional arrangement, it was both an imperial monastery and a

All of this gives us a means of connecting the *Chronographia*, Michael the *synkellos*, and the empress Theodora in the mid-840s. This book has identified the original *Chronographia* with a group of non-Stoudite iconophiles who associated with the patriarchate of Nikephoros I. If, as I have just proposed, the first Greek recension was put together by the ideological heirs of this earlier group—a non-Stoudite pro-icon monastic community—then the monks of the Chora monastery are prime candidates. I have shown that Michael the *synkellos* and *hegoumenos* of Chora was as close to the inner circle of supporters of Theodora as one could be. In addition to the general associations between Theodora's own agendas and those of the work (noted above), the more specific indications of an interest in Syria that we have tracked in the final entries of the *Chronographia* would have had positive implications for Theodora's own reliance on a *synkellos* who hailed from Syria. Finally, Michael the *synkellos* arrived in Constantinople in 814/15, the very years in which I have argued the *Chronographia* was completed, and he stayed at the Chora monastery, with which a copy of the *Chronographia* has been directly associated.[78] There is much in Michael the *synkellos*' personal history and in what we can know of his politics to make the agendas of the *Chronographia* a good fit for his own.

The manuscript *PG 1710* itself can offer one more argument for the plausibility of this connection. This manuscript is likely a surviving codex of the first Greek recension of the *Chronographia* rather than merely a copy of that recension. As such characteristics of that codex such as its small size, less tidy handwriting, and lower quality parchment tell us about the economic status of the production. If the manuscript *PG 1710* is an original copy of this recension of the period from 843–847 it is unlikely to have been directly patronized by Theodora or produced by the imperial scriptorium. This all fits with the hypothesis that it was copied by less well-endowed supporters of Theodora, such as at the Chora monastery where Michael the Synkellos was *hegoumenos*.

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private monastery. As Hatlie (*Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 337–43) explains, this is a paradox, but not a contradiction. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos offers a further clarification about *synkelloi* who were also *hegoumenoi* of important monasteries. In Philotheos' enumeration of the feasts following Christmas, he notes that the sixth day of the Nativity Feast was designated as the day on which the *hegoumenoi* of the imperial monasteries were to dine at the emperor's table. Applying the text's logic of precedence, if one of the *hegoumenoi* was also the patriarch's *synkellos*, he would outrank anyone else at the table besides the emperor. The *synkellos-hegoumenos* would be the *de facto* leader of these powerful monastics as they interacted with the emperor. In theory, the *synkellos* of Constantinople would control the most powerful monasteries of Constantinople on behalf of the emperor, which also gave him a power base entirely distinct from the patriarchate.

78   Mango and Scott, *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, xcviii with bibliography at n137.

Perhaps the monks at Chora possessed a copy of the original *Chronographia* and desired the empress to see herself in the model of Irene. Or perhaps Michael the Synkellos' circle of Syrian refugees saw themselves in the work's original author and in the final entries' explicit incorporation of the Christians of Syria within the Byzantine οἰκουμένη.

It is impossible to prove conclusively that the associates of Michael the Synkellos and the Chora Monastery were patrons of the new edition of the *Chronographia* crafted for ca. 843. However, all I have sought to show here is that while we may not be able to associate this recension with anyone in particular within the circle of Theodora, that circle is certainly the most likely intended audience. My end in this has been to return to the initial question of this study not by proving the exact reception of the *Chronographia*, but by using the discussion of a plausible scenario to identify how and for whom history-writing continued to matter in ninth-century Constantinople.

What about the *Chronographia* made it such a dominant force in Byzantine historiography? Byzantium did not leave a great number of historical texts from the ninth century, but it did leave a great one: the *Chronographia* of George and Theophanes. That the *Chronographia*'s era perceived it as great is revealed by the many times powerful intellects returned to the text to make meaning of their present. Why did they do so? The preceding chapters answered this question by reading the work as a literary whole, grounded in the presentation of the text in its surviving manuscripts, especially in *PG 1710*. But this manuscript also has its own story to tell about the afterlife of the text. The differences in the version of the *Chronographia* preserved in this manuscript must not only be read as the means to uncover an early or original version, but also (if not more so) as evidence for continuation, adaptation, and use. Changes in the text tell us of new ways the text was read, or made to signify, at the time those changes were made, at the time of the different recensions, and as such they tell us how the text continued to matter.

We can use this material for more productive historical ends than we have. Further study of the writing and each subsequent re-writing of the *Chronographia* as historiographical events in their own right can continue to unveil the intellectual climate at the courts of Constantinople. Beyond the first Greek recension, other recensions can tell us how the text of the *Chronographia* continued to be adapted to provide insights into the political landscape of the Byzantine world. The idea that the *Chronographia* could be a mirror for princes has been amply demonstrated over the course of this book. We know that the *Chronographia* continued to matter not only during the reigns of Theodora (r. 842–857) but of Michael III (r. 857–867) and Basil I (r. 867–886). Furthermore, J. Signes Codoñer has shown that descendants of

empress Irene thought the work had value for shaping imperial behaviors well into the tenth-century Macedonian period.[79] Likewise, F. Montinaro has shown how the material of the *Chronographia* was incorporated into the *speculum principis* that is the *De Administrando Imperio* of Constantine VII.[80]

4   Writing Time in the Early Middle Ages

In this chapter, I have returned to the question of how and why the *Chronographia* not only survived but became the dominant, definitive work of history described in the Introduction. This afterlife was by no means guaranteed. Uniquely among early medieval chronographers, George the Synkellos had designed his *Chronographia* to *undermine* the reigning power, the emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811). This emperor (Nikephoros I) was never decried as a heretic and would die in battle in an effort to save the empire. And yet, the *Chronographia* accuses that emperor as being—or at the very least serving the interests of—the Antichrist. Later George's completing author, Theophanes, changed the impetus of the argument to both support the legitimacy of the new regime of Leo V (r. 813–820), and to urge Leo not to turn to iconoclasm. The success of the regime of Leo V in re-establishing a policy of iconoclasm should have rendered the *Chronographia* a doomed project, and it must have seemed to be one for decades after AD 815. Leo V was followed by Michael II the Amorian who—though he is almost certainly a part of the conspiracy to murder Leo—explicitly continued Leo V's policy of iconoclasm. Iconoclasm was in turn continued by Michael's son the emperor Theophilos. The *Chronographia* lay dormant until these iconoclasts had been removed from power: for decades after AD 815 it cannot have circulated widely or seemed to have much chance of fulfilling its destiny as the definitive chronography of the empire.

But while the *Chronographia* lay dormant, it was not forgotten. Regardless of who they were, the editors of the *Chronographia* in the 840s determined that George and Theophanes' universalizing chronographic project was designed to continue to rewrite ancient time for new political realities, and so the text was edited once again to have a new, third end (or purpose) in addition to

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79   Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI."

80   Montinaro, "Chronicle of Theophanes in the Indirect Tradition." Pushing even further, we might consider that since we know Constantine VII knew the *Chronographia* well enough to cite from it, he may have been informed by the *Chronographia* as a whole in his ideas of why "piety" related so closely to effective rule.

the two just described. We have seen that the *Chronographia* had originally depicted the Carolingians as the potential saviors of a Byzantine empire slipping into heresy and thus as the solution to Irene's problems. However, the 840s editors' work to shift the narrative about iconoclasm's origins mitigated this idea by making a Pope in flight the cause of Byzantium's embarrassing legacy of heretical emperors. The updated narrative about the origins of iconoclasm would also—apparently by felicitous chance—keep the work in sync with the relations that would develop with the West into the 860s, when intensifying competition between Carolingian Rome and Constantinople came to a head over competing alliances with Boris, king of the Bulgars. Indeed, the updated "western" policy of the first Greek recension fit the anti-Latin agendas of Basil I in the late 860s and early 870s even better than it did the last Amorians of the 840s.[81] Perhaps supporters of the regime of Basil I wanted to recover and claim for the new dynasty the definitive historical account which had become associated with the "Armenian" emperors from Leo V through Michael III. Adopting the *Chronographia* as their own would prevent the formidable ideological power of this masterwork from being used by opponents of Basil's vulnerable regime. If so, we can state that the 840s reframing of the *Chronographia* would seem to have prevented the work from falling once again into obscurity.

The *Chronographia* was a text of political rhetoric and, by a fortunate combination of design and chance, the way it was written made it possible to be revised to meet new political ends that its authors could never have imagined. The *Chronographia* was thus a work born of a failed rebellion, completed during a crisis among the ruling faction. But more important for its survival, and certainly the key to the secret of its continued relevance, it was incisively re-edited when new political needs demanded a new historical framework.[82] This is the miracle of the late success of the *Chronographia*, for a chronography finely and carefully crafted for a fleeting moment in 808–810 still managed to

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81   Based on the dates of the list of patriarchs at the beginning of the manuscript *Wake Greek 5*, this second Greek recension (*Gr2*) was likely produced during the reign of Basil I while Photios was still patriarch but before Ignatios would be appointed to his second term: right around Basil's accession in AD 867.

82   Today we invest no such political capital in chronographic enterprises, in no small part because time is no longer malleable, no longer so directly subject to changing political fortunes. In the pre-modern world, any historical time was only as universal as any single polity's *auctoritas*. Annual time consisted of the reckoning of local political successions: counting years meant listing rulers. For this reason, it was always also possible for a medieval chronographer to re-write time when a political *auctoritas* changed its domain, or its mythology.

be considered definitive when it was re-issued in the 840s, thirty years after its intended moment.

Byzantinists do not have the plethora of surviving annalistic historical texts that scholars of the Carolingian world have spent the last decades productively reading and re-reading. Nevertheless, no individual product of the Carolingian courts can compare to the masterwork that is the *Chronographia*, nor to the afterlife made possible by its subsequent reworkings.[83] It is of course possible that the editing activities behind the surviving manuscripts may be different from what I have described but if so, the truth will be even more complex than what I have hypothesized: we may not even know half of the story and what I have defined as two Greek recensions may in fact be the product of a dozen. My proposal is cautious in its details because my goal is to provide the contours of how the *Chronographia* conveyed meaning in and beyond its own era and so remained the definitive Byzantine chronography for centuries. But by treating the *Chronographia* of George and Theophanes as a source on what it meant to write, to read, and to re-produce a chronography in Constantinople in the first half of the ninth century I have also offered that story as a means to think anew about the *praxis* of early medieval chronography in general.

The specific task of the early medieval chronographer was in the name— to rewrite time. A chronographer wrote past time into the time of their own present political community, and in doing so explained the political present in relationship to the entire past.[84] They defined empires and framed individual reigns within not only all history but all time. A chronographer synchronized all known reckonings of time and ordered them within the sequential steps of time's emplotment, of providence itself.[85] It was in the nature of

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83   In dialogue with: Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 278–83.

84   G. Spiegel contextualized the later medieval chronicles of St. Denys by pursuing the "social logic" of the text "within a local regional social context of human relations, systems of communication, and networks of power." In this vision the twelfth-century local chronicles of St. Denys are a "vehicle for the expression of fundamental ideas concerning the nature of medieval political reality," a "political reality and its relation to the political past." Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 24, 110 cf. 98.

85   For an overview see Michael I. Allen, "Universal History, 300–1000: Origins and Western Developments," in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. Deborah M. Deliyannis (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 17–42. See now: Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Tradition from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD*, vol. 1, *A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). In Constantinople this decisive shift from *historia* to *chronica* held firm from the sixth century through to the tenth century, leaving hardly any surviving

chronographies, as with all universalizing encyclopedic projects, to convey ideological re-orientations.[86] The ninth century of the Wider West (the culturally, politically, and economically connected zones of the Mediterranean, Europe, North Africa, and the Near East) was an age of new and renewed empires, with a newly conceived empire under the Carolingian Franks, a resurgent Roman Empire in Constantinople, and the second great Islamic dynasty under the 'Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad. These dynasties' new and renewed imperial claims needed legitimization. They were drawn to, among other strategies, the specific sort of world-making orientation that chronographers could produce.[87] In doing so they inspired a shift in the craft of telling and writing the past away from the distinctly literary genre of *historia* and towards the distinctly "scientific" genre of not only annalistic accounts generally but *chronica* specifically.[88]

What made this particular form of writing the past fit the ninth-century political and diplomatic landscape cannot be fully clarified here, for the need to re-situate the present in terms of the past is not sufficient to explain the appeal of chronicles. Other genres besides *chronica* did so, such as *historia*, astronomies, legal codifications, martyrologies, theological *florilegia*, *encyclopediae*, or *geographia* (Eratosthenes, for instance, rewrote the space of the world to contextualize imperial universality).[89] What we *can* say is that there is an

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examples of *historia*, but many of *chronica* or *chronographia*. Papaioannou, "Byzantine Historia," 301.

86   Jason König and Greg Woolf, eds., *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13–18.

87   Modern historians forget that actively creating historical time was long a political activity. See: Denis C Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History*, Sather Classical Lectures 65 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

88   Annals are year-by-year accounts beginning with a recent point in time. "Universal" or "world" chronicles are comprehensive surveys of all past time that begin with the creation of matter and investigate the very method of ordering events in time. The misconception that the annal and chronicle are forms of the same genre is based on the fact that they are both accounts of the past structured by the passage of time. This anachronistically imposes later medieval conceptions upon the early medieval form. Thus, Hayden White's brilliant conclusions about the form of medieval chronicles using a tenth-century version of the *Annales of San Gall* should not be directly applied to early medieval universal chronicles: Hayden V. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 14–25, especially 16–18.

89   See Duane W. Roller, *Eratosthenes' Geography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). On the interrelationship of and overlap between these genres see A. Merrills on the importance of geography in the histories of Orosius, Jordanes, Isidore, and Bede in: Andrew H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, CSMLT IV.64 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

undeniable connection between chronographies and imperial power in the Early Middle Ages. Something about this genre tapped into the lifeblood of ninth-century political discourse. While all empires of the Wider West came to use the chronicle form to articulate their claims to universality, the Carolingians and Byzantines shared an additional, specific characteristic in their approach to chronicling: the assumption that political universality was based on the same Roman past.[90] In this context, immense political and cultural capital was invested in making a historical and diplomatically recognized claim to Rome.[91] In the hundred years between Charlemagne (r. 768–814) and Basil I the Macedonian (r. 867–886), the ability to portray one's empire as holding the place of Rome within God's providential plan meant the difference between being remembered as the founder of a golden age dynasty, a murdering usurper or even, as we have seen, the Antichrist.[92] The power of the

90   Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*; Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity*, TCH 17 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

91   On the importance of Rome for Latin chronicles see: Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). See also: Rosamond McKitterick, "Roman Texts and Roman History in the Early Middle Ages," in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas c. 500–1400*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, and Claudia Bolgia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19–34; Rosamond McKitterick, "Transformations of the Roman Past and Roman Identity in the Early Middle Ages," in Gantner, McKitterick, and Meeder, *Resources of the Past*, 225–44.

92   Providential chronology held imperial Rome as the successor to the Hebrew past, an idea established in late antique exegesis of prophetic texts where time not only had a beginning at the Creation, but a terminus coinciding with the collapse of the last empire of the last age. That empire was always Rome. On early medieval divisions of the past into periods progressing towards an apocalyptic or messianic end see: Oded Irshai, "Dating the Eschaton: Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Calculations in Late Antiquity," in *Apocalyptic Time*, ed. Albert I. Baumgarten, Numen Book Series 86 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 114–53. On eschatology and history, see: Paul Magdalino, "The History of the Future and Its Uses: Prophecy and Propaganda," in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Roderick Beaton and Charlotte Rouché (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993). In particular, see pp. 3–5 on the common eschatological frameworks of Daniel's "Four Kingdoms" and the "Six Days of Creation." The most popular early medieval apocalyptic text, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius (extant in Syriac, Latin, and Greek), divided history into seven epochs. Still essential is Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy Abrahamse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) remains the most comprehensive account of exchanges over the idea of the Antichrist in the later ninth century, though it should be read with V. Grummel's review in *Revue des Études Byzantines* 10 (1952): 282–283, and F. Dvornik's update, "The Patriarch Photius in Light of Recent Research," in *Berichte*

early medieval chronographer was to define present political ambitions in relation to the most powerful of historic empires—to rewrite the past so that present emperors became the successors to the empires of the Romans, Greeks, or Persians. The chronographers of ninth-century emperors turned tenuous grasps on power into the sort of magnificent historical synthesis that could legitimize usurpers as founders of dynasties. I shown that the *Chronographia* became a dominant force in Byzantine historiography *because* it was open to continuation and adaptation depending on the political moment. Its own multiple endings and later adaptations testify to this component of its lasting value. This *time-writing* was meant to stand forever. It did so for so long because it changed with the times. That chronographies had not merely a political bent but a political theory of their own is no longer a surprise, but a starting presumption. The question now is not whether there is a politics of time, but what were—and are—its ends.

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zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress: München 1958 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1960), item III.2 republished in Francis Dvornik, *Photian and Byzantine Ecclesiastical Studies*, Variorum Reprint CS32 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1974), chapter 6. See now Liliana Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross: Photios, Bulgaria, and the Papacy, 860s–880s* (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1998).

Writing Time for an End

Scholars have looked to the *Chronographia* for a specific sort of historical truth: the sort of historical truth which can be placed onto a timeline. But making the pursuit of historical accuracy the aim and end of work on the *Chronographia* is merely to seek our own historically conditioned ends. While we may desire and indeed have a use for such data, our methodologies must acknowledge when our ends are not what the *Chronographia* (or any other text) set out to facilitate.[1] My account of the *Chronographia* has not assessed its transmission of objective chronological data about events. The *Chronographia* was written to tell the truths of the past for its own present, not ours. It gives no indication that its ultimate goal was to establish the past as a series of ancient events that could be used as a guide for accurate time travel. Instead of promising objectively true historical data, the *Chronographia* promised to equip the reader to reap no small benefit (οὐ γὰρ μικρὰν ὠφέλιαν … καρποῦται). It offered readers an account of the past which would reliably or trustworthily convey how the present lay in relation to the living eschaton of the divine. In the end the *Chronographia* was written to explain, through a specific treatment of the past, a vision of the present which made a new present possible.

Though my account of the *Chronographia* has prioritized analysis over narrative, I have done so because it can be difficult to initially identify narrative strategies and purpose in works that are largely compilations of other sources.[2] But indeed, there has been a story behind my analysis. In order to let the analysis stand on its own terms, I have largely refrained from explaining what I have discovered as a story. Nonetheless, here at the end I would sketch as clearly as I can the outlines of the plot.

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1   Ruth J. Macrides, "How the Byzantines Wrote History," in *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Smilja Marjanović-Dušanić (Belgrade: Serbian National Committee of the Association Internationale des Études Byzantines, 2016), 259–61.

2   We are getting better. From Ursula Betka et al., eds., *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*, BYZAUS 16 (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006) to Charis Messis, Margaret Mullett, and Ingela Nilsson, eds., *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological Approaches to Byzantine Texts and Images*, AUU SBU 19 (Uppsala University Press, 2018). The fundamental starting point on identifying narrative strategy in citation, editing, and adaptation in the *Chronographia* remains Jakov Ljubarskij, "Concerning the Literary Technique of Theophanes the Confessor," *Byzantinoslavica* 56, no. 2 (1995): 317–22.

In AD 808 George the Synkellos started writing the *Chronographia*. We do not know his story, or the story of what caused him to write. George might well have been an émigré to Constantinople from the educated Greek-speaking elites of Syria. While this is probable, we will not ever know if it is true. George might well have been suffering, while writing, from the physical abuse, financial ruin, and banishment from Constantinople inflicted upon those who played a role in the conspiracies against Nikephoros I, conspiracies uncovered and prosecuted from AD 806–808. While this is probable, we still do not know. What we do know is that George was the *synkellos* to patriarch Tarasios (r. 784–806) and while this is as certain as anything we can know, we do not know exactly when during Tarasios' reign George served in his capacity as the imperial liaison in the patriarchate. We can, as I have in this book, recover what this bare information about the authorial persona would have signaled to readers in the early ninth century. But while that is essential for a historicized reading of his text, the little we can know about George is not the most interesting or certain thing to arise from a prolonged investigation into the *Chronographia*. The story about how the *Chronographia* came to be is not recoverable, though we can state that the *Chronographia* was given its impetus by our mysterious *synkellos* George—whoever he was and whatever he had done.

What about the *Chronographia* itself? The *Chronographia* was an incredibly ambitious project. It was explicitly written to supplant the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea. Eusebius' *Chronicle* had served as the definitive reference work on historical time for nearly half a millennium, for at least four linguistic communities around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Armenian. But in the final decades of the eighth century, Eusebius' oeuvre had been charged with iconoclast sympathies. This was the opportunity for the *Chronographia*'s revisionism, the opportunity to supplant an ancient, internationally acclaimed record of human time with both a new conception of time and a new definition of the present.

The *Chronographia*'s new time was, at first glance, simply a repackaged old time. The *Chronographia* reaffirmed the older Alexandrian tabulation of world chronology which Eusebius' reckoning had supplanted: Julius Africanus and Annianos' calculation that there were 5,500 years between the Creation of the world and the Incarnation of the Christ. But the stakes were not *just* between two different ways of tallying years; the argument was not merely an antiquarian return. The *Chronographia*'s re-assertion of the Alexandrian tabulation of *anni mundi* provided a new understanding of the relationship between human chronology and the divine present. By bringing the philosophy of Aristotle and the astronomy of Ptolemy into conversation with the liturgical theology of the

day, the *Chronographia* proposed a time that was philosophical, scientific, and theologically astute: the new historical time of the First-Created Day. By using a new time to craft a new era the *Chronographia* changed the definition of the present, and thus of the future.

The *Chronographia*'s new epoch for the present did not initiate the modern era with the Incarnation in AM 5500 but with the conquest of Judea by Pompey in AM 5434 (in 63 BC). This beginning defined the present age by Roman rule over Judea via the establishment of Herod as king in Jerusalem or, in its own terms, the era of the rule of a non-Jew over Judea. In other words, the *Chronographia* asserted that the present began when the age of Jewish rule ended and rule by the Romans began. It presented a new polity under the special favor of God in the terms which O. Irshai has connected to the "concept of the elect nation."[3] To ensure that readers did not miss this point, the chronological division was made manifest in the structure of the codex: the *Chronographia* circulated in codices that bound George's account of the beginning of the present era—from AM 5434 (63 BC) to AM 5777 (AD 284)—with his continuator's completion of the account to AM 6305 (AD 813).

What was the story of the present? The *Chronographia*'s story turned the reigns of past Roman emperors into images, figures, or types. As no surprise either to Byzantinists in general, nor to scholars of the *Chronographia* in particular, the reign of the emperor Constantine I was paradigmatic.[4] However, the *Chronographia* did not make the reign of Constantine I into a single type but into a multivalent image. As argued in chapter 5, in the longer narrative trajectory of the *Chronographia*, the portrait of Constantine I was joined to that of his son Constantius, and as such the pairing established a type of the pious emperor who was nonetheless deceived during his reign into promulgating bad policies (whether ecclesiastical or fiscal), and who then bequeathed those evils to the empire in the form of a successor implementing evil policies from the start and then continuing them throughout their reign. This

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3   Shay Eshel, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, MM 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

4   Roger D. Scott, "The Image of Constantine the Great in Malalas and Theophanes," in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries: Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992*, ed. Paul Magdalino, PSPBS 2 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 57–71; Roger D. Scott, "The First Half of Theophanes' Chronicle," in *Studies in Theophanes*, ed. Marek Jankowiak and Federico Montinaro, Travaux et Mémoires 19 (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2015), 239–60.

imperial type or figure—in the specific sense articulated by E. Auerbach[5]—would be repeatedly fulfilled through later emperors including Heraclius and Constans II, Leo III and Constantine V, and Nikephoros I and Staurakios.

Constantine I also established the positive image for imperial power in the *Chronographia*: the image of a mixed-gender collaboration (chapter 6). Here Constantine's following of the divine injunction given to his mother Helena established a type that was fulfilled in the sharing of power between Theodosius II and Pulcheria, and Irene and Constantine VI. Though the type was compromised by greed (by Theodosius and Irene), the paradigmatic image was nonetheless clear. The *Chronographia* presented a story of empire in which the ideal type of imperial power consisted in a man and a woman working in conjunction to stay the course of merciful and just rulership, a type unsurprisingly reminiscent of the theological image of Christ and the *Theotokos* Mother-of-God.

The *Chronographia* juxtaposed these positive and negative types of emperors. That is, imperial types could be contrasted between emperors, or within emperors' own reigns. In this manner the story of the *Chronographia* was created by using these types to explain how the present emperor, Nikephoros I, came to power and exactly why and how he was evil. Nikephoros came to power because of the destruction of the ideal mother-son type of Irene and Constantine VI. His evils made manifest the greed of all previous evil emperors. The final story the *Chronographia* had to tell used a coda to rearrange these types in a message to the new emperor Leo V: to support a fiscal policy of low taxation and ecclesiastical control over social services, and to listen to the empress (Theodosia) in matters of religious policy.

The story of the *Chronographia* is a story about a unique idea of political life communicated as a vision of an *oikumene* that could transcend the boundaries of empire. As we have seen, the *Chronographia* is too self-evidently complex, clever, and self-aware to fit into any simple dichotomous analytical categories we might use to try to categorize it: monastic vs. lay, ecclesiastical vs. political, male vs. female, Roman vs. non-Roman, and (as in chapter 8) even pro-icon vs. anti-icon. Its vision was of an *oikumene* incorporating diasporic Christian communities of Armenians and Syrians and protecting them from oppressive regimes. It told a story of the empire as a present and future community that was bound together with a shared understanding and experience of time. The story of the *Chronographia* was a story about truth, narrative, power, and belonging.

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5 Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Theory and History of Literature 9 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 11–76.

1   The Past Study

This study asked what the *Chronographia*'s formulation of the past tells us about its present, for "those who write history write the present."[6] What does the *Chronographia* tell us about its present, about the years 808 through 815? I have argued that the *Chronographia*'s remaking of the present through its presentation of the past is significant not only for a history of its own age but for a history of ages after: the *Chronographia* would dominate historical writing in Greek for centuries after it was written. This made it necessary to address not only how this re-presentation of the past reshaped perceptions of the past, and how in doing so remade its present,[7] but to address how the work's vision of the present became a lasting historical paradigm, a framework in the subsequent decades when it was actively edited, adapted, repurposed, and continued.[8]

I began this study arguing that the *Chronographia*'s self-presentation as well as the history of its transmission oblige us to read it as a joint project shared between George the Synkellos and Theophanes (chapter 1). While the conclusion of this argument itself is not new to scholarship, what is entirely new is to avoid merely reapplying that point to asking (again) whether this means the *Chronicle* attributed to Theophanes should be *actually* attributed to George.[9] Instead, I pursued a new question. Rather than asking who wrote the *Chronographia*, I asked how it was read. I turned to the manuscript evidence to formulate my answer, asking what the surviving manuscripts could

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6   Lorenzo DiTommaso, "The Four Kingdoms of Daniel in the Early Mediaeval Apocalyptic Tradition," in *Four Kingdom Motifs before and beyond the Book of Daniel*, ed. Andrew Perrin and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Themes in Biblical Narrative 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 234. Though asking this question is essential to ask of any work of history, for the *Chronographia* it has been left unaddressed, albeit see: Ihor Ševčenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 279–93.

7   Rosamond McKitterick, "Roman Texts and Roman History in the Early Middle Ages," in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas c. 500–1400*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick, John Osborne, and Claudia Bolgia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29.

8   Federico Montinaro, "The Chronicle of Theophanes in the Indirect Tradition" in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 177–206; Juan Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 159–76.

9   This tendency (and the problem with it) was articulated clearly in Patricia Varona, "Chronographical Polemics in Ninth-Century Constantinople: George Synkellos, Iconoclasm and the Greek Chronicle Tradition," *Eranos* 108 (2017): 118.

tell us about how the work's contemporary audience would have read it.[10] From this evidence two paths diverged and I set out to travel both.

First, over the course of Part 1, I articulated a new approach to the *Chronographia* and its account of the past in the present by working through the implications of my redefinition of the work. That is, Part 1 started with a concrete example of how the section of the project attributed to George the Synkellos—known as the *Chronography*—defined the present age from the epoch, the starting point, of the conquest of Judea by the Romans.[11] Further pressing implications of George's governing idea of the chronological project were addressed: how would George's authorial mask or *persona* be read by a contemporary reader (chapter 2);[12] how would George's theory of time—the First-Created Day—communicate meaning to a ninth-century Constantinopolitan; and, how would that meaning direct readings of his account of the past (chapter 3)? I brought a study of George's office of *synkellos*, and of his understudied programmatic preface, to bear on the *Preface* of Theophanes. Though the *Preface* of Theophanes has been exhaustively debated, my approach meant re-reading it as a guide for a reader who encountered it when they were already part way through the work. Studied as a reading of George's project, the *Preface* became an invitation to contemporary readers to rethink not only past events, but the entire relationship of past to present (chapter 4). In articulating *how* the work's audience was invited to read the present in the past, this conclusion to Part 1 set up the eventual analysis of the ends for which this invitation was made (chapter 8).

Seeing how way led on to way, Part 2 then returned to the starting point and took up the second path. Taking up a different set of initial expectations from Part 1, I turned to the task of analyzing the *Chronographia*'s account of Roman history down to its present, starting with the beginning of its account of its own present age. I then performed an extended reading of the work's account of the Roman past on the basis of the second premise established by chapter 1: that the unique form of the *Chronographia* in the earliest surviving manuscript

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10   A research program indicated several years ago in: Jesse W. Torgerson, "From the Many, One? The Shared Manuscripts of the Chronicle of Theophanes and the Chronography of Synkellos," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 117.

11   The *Chronographia* repeatedly and insistently defines the present age from the epoch (ἐποχή or starting point) from the beginning of the "reign of a non-Jew over Judea." On which formulation see the discussions in chapter 1 section 2, and chapter 3 sections 3 and 4.

12   In the sense articulated by Stratis Papaioannou, "Voice, Signature, Mask: The Byzantine Author," in *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities*, ed. Aglae Pizzone, BYZARCH 28 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 21–40.

(*PG 1710*) is likely more similar to the original form of the work than the form in later surviving manuscripts (on which our critical editions and translations have depended). The difference is significant. If the text was written in year-by-year annual entries—as in later manuscripts—then our readings of the work must take annual entries as the core narrative structural unit.[13] However, if the text was written in emperor-by-emperor narrative units—with annual notices serving as subdivisions therein—then the account of each emperor's reign can be read as a coherent portrait or image.[14] Literary-minded scholars have long called our attention to the latter option: there are obvious and unmistakable narrative strategies in the arrangement, editorial comments, and re-phrasings of source material in the *Chronographia*'s accounts of individual emperors.[15] To date this point had, however, only been proposed as a possibility for the narratives of three emperors: Constantine I,[16] Justinian I,[17] and Herakleios.[18] By bringing the original layout of the text into this discussion I provided a means to ask the question of narrative strategy of the entire *Chronographia*. I duly found an obvious congruence between the conclusions of narratological readings of specific emperors' reigns, and the form of the entire *Chronographia* in the manuscript *PG 1710*, which is divided emperor-by-emperor.

On this basis I used chapters 5, 6, and 7 to identify not only coherent narrative structures within the reigns of specific emperors, but to define the

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13   This approach was most recently articulated in Marek Jankowiak, "Framing Universal History: Syncellus' Canon and Theophanes' Rubrics," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 53–72.

14   This approach was most recently articulated in Signes Codoñer, "Theophanes at the Time of Leo VI," 169–76.

15   The general "trend to narrativity" was pointed out unmistakably by Ljubarskij, "Concerning the Literary Technique," 322.

16   Igor S. Čičurov, *Vizantijskie istoričeskie sočineniâ: "Hronografiâ" Feofana, "Breviarij" Nikifora: teksty, perevod, kommentarij* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980). Scott, "Image of Constantine."

17   Roger D. Scott, "Writing the Reign of Justinian: Malalas versus Theophanes," in *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?*, ed. Pauline Allen and Elizabeth Jeffreys, BYZAUS 10 (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1996), 20–34; Roger D. Scott, "'The Events of Every Year, Arranged without Confusion': Justinian and Others in the Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor," in *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS1004 (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 49–65; Scott, "The First Half of Theophanes' Chronicle."

18   Jenny Ferber, "Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius," in *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference*, ed. Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, Michael J. Jeffreys, and Ann Moffatt, BYZAUS 1 (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, 1981), 32–42. Anastasia Sirotenko, "Constructing Memory: The Chronicle of Theophanes on the Reign of Heraclius," in *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological Approaches to Byzantine Texts and Images*, ed. Chares Messes, Margaret Mullett, and Ingela Nilsson, AUU SBU 19 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018), 223–42.

shared narrative strategies which join together these imperial reigns. The clearest narrative strategy was typology.[19] Tracking the use of typologies made it possible to identify rhetorical goals sustained throughout the entire *Chronographia*,[20] and so to see the whole as much greater than the sum of the parts.[21] Part 2 concluded by showing that patterns in the typological progression of portraits of emperors culminated in a juxtaposition of the reign of the Empress Irene (r. 780–802) with that of her successor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811). The previously-perplexing invective against Nikephoros I—who reigned at the time of the *Chronographia*'s inception—was found to present a carefully-crafted, long-anticipated image of Nikephoros as the fulfillment of Pharaoh and so the Antichrist of time's end.

Up to this point I had contextualized the *Chronographia*'s vision of the past within its present. The images in the *Chronographia*, its portraits of emperors, were thus not merely new readings of the past but a new vision of how the world *is* and how it *could be*: a different idea of the present which contained new possibilities for the future.[22] An explanation of how all of this made meaning in the work's present remained. What were the ends to which its framing of time were, and could be, put?

My final two chapters responded to this question by considering the afterlife of the *Chronographia*. As such they built from the fact that soon after the invective against Nikephoros I was written it would have been rendered moot by the fact of the emperor's annihilation in battle against the Bulgar ruler Krum in AD 811. Chapter 8 thus argued that the entries which stand as the current ending were added within a few years of George the Synkellos' death in order to redirect the *Chronographia* to the new political contexts of the early reign of Leo V (ca. 815). This argument made it possible to sketch out the

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19   Erich Auerbach, "Typological Symbolism in Medieval Literature," *Yale French Studies* 9 (1952): 3–10.

20   A point that has also been previously made by following a consistent topical theme through the work: "… the narrative structures of the *Chronicle* … went beyond rewriting separate episodes on the key figures of Byzantine history." Irina Tamarkina, "Veneration of Relics in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 261–69.

21   A point also made in: Patricia Varona, "Three Clergymen against Nikephoros I: Remarks on Theophanes' Chronicle (AM 6295–6303)," *Byzantion* 84 (2014): 485–509; Varona, "Chronographical Polemics in Ninth-Century Constantinople."

22   "The imagination is the power of the mind over the possibilities of things; but if this constitutes a certain single characteristic, it is the source not of a certain single value but of as many values as reside in the possibilities of things." Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 136.

contours of the likely intellectual circle in which and for which the work was produced: a powerful group closely connected to Leo V who nonetheless expressed dissent to certain of Leo's policies through a claim to the legacy of the Empress Irene. Possessed of a coherent explanation for how this work achieved the status of a masterwork of chronographical genius, I then considered how its reception through the subsequent decades could help explain the exact form of the work that comes down to us. In chapter 9 I argued that the *Chronographia* was significantly edited once more during the regency and reign of the Empress Theodora (ca. 843–858). This editing brought the work into alignment with Theodora's own ideological program to rewrite the past to fit her present: the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

I have proved the ends of time in the *Chronographia* by combining the methods of textual criticism, manuscript studies, and literary analysis to demonstrate not merely *that* the *Chronographia* was composed and read as a unified whole, but *how* it was that this masterwork was a reaction to its initial present and an active agent in shaping perceptions of the past in at least two additional present moments.[23] These adaptations of the work, these several ends, make it possible to see that the *Chronographia* achieved its power as the definitive historical paradigm of its age *because* its presentation of the past could be adapted anew. I have explained how this chronography worked in order to open up a window onto how early medieval Byzantines debated and communicated the relationship between past and present, and the ends to which they deployed that intellectual labor. This new window onto the past connects the composition of a chronography to political discourse and political action in Constantinople during the period the work was composed and repeatedly re-edited: from 808 into the mid-ninth century. In this way *The Ends of Time* not only rehabilitates modern study of the *Chronographia* but opens up multiple new directions for future research into its socio-political environment.

By following the evidence of the present in the *Chronographia*'s account of the past, this study found that the work transmitted a different sort of *correct* or *accurate* information than that which modern historians have tended to prize. Perhaps this is because we are now better primed to follow a text such as the *Chronographia* than we have been. In our era of the quoted tweet, shared post, and viral meme, we would seem more intuitively attuned to the idea of authorship and *auctoritas* as a fluid, communally constructed concept. We may well be better equipped to think through a historical compilation or a

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23   McKitterick, "Roman Texts and Roman History in the Early Middle Ages," 29.

compendium of chronology now than in all the centuries since the printing press came to dominate the dissemination of written texts.[24] The real historical value and significance of the *Chronographia* lies in its evidence of the present moments of the *Chronographia*'s initial writing by George the Synkellos and Theophanes (in 808–815), and then its re-writing (in ca. 843), inherent as they are in the form and content of the *Chronographia* transmitted to us today. As long as historians continue to look primarily for a literally true account—an objective history—in the pages of the *Chronographia*, we will miss much of its meaning. The meaning which the *Chronographia* communicated was non-literal, and non-explicit. The story at the close of AM 6302 of the Parable of the *Keroullarios* and the emperor Nikephoros I, for instance, cannot have been included for the purpose of ensuring that future generations knew that the emperor once met with a wealthy candle-maker. It was composed to help readers understand what Nikephoros I *meant*. The verification of this meeting by modern historical critical methods will never happen. We can *never* know whether such an encounter took place; the literal meaning is lost in every way. But that was never what the *Chronographia* meant to convey. Its purpose was not to convey information about Nikephoros' agenda of a noonday in AD 810, but to convey the truth of the man within the truth of the world.

2   The Present Discourse

The aim of this study is to directly supplement the collective endeavor to re-write the story of ninth-century Constantinople.[25] This remains a subtle process. Until the Macedonians, the historical works of the Roman Empire that do survive from this period seem most often to be articulating a minority

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24   For a recent example, see: Robert Evans and Rosamond McKitterick, "A Carolingian Epitome of Orosius from Tours: Leiden VLQ 20," in *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches*, ed. Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, CELAMA 24 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 123–53. For a comprehensive study of the phenomenon see especially chapter 6, "Collections of historical excerpts as a specific locus for (re)writing history" in Panagiotis Manafis, *(Re)Writing History in Byzantium: A Critical Study of Collections of Historical Excerpts*, Routledge Research in Byzantine Studies (New York: Routledge, 2020).

25   On which task see: Óscar Prieto Domínguez, *Literary Circles in Byzantine Iconoclasm: Patrons, Politics and Saints* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*, SEMH (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012); Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Michel Kaplan, *Byzance: Villes et campagnes*, Les médiévistes français 7 (Paris: Picard, 2006).

report, a critique, more than apologia or myth-making at the service of the political *status quo*. This makes our surviving Byzantine histories troublesome candidates for providing us with direct evidence for concepts such as 'identity formation.'[26] The *Chronographia* wrote history less in the service of identify formation than political critique.[27] Thus, it is difficult to see how to contextualize the *Chronographia* with comparative historical projects, such as those undertaken under the Carolingians. The Carolingian coup engendered an entire reformulation of the past in order to explain why one powerful family of magnates should be sanctioned in taking power from a recognized kingly line. The answer to this question was the formation of an identity—the Franks—out of the elements of the "Roman, Christian, and Merovingian past" so strong that its heritage could be said to have created the very idea of Europe.[28] The Carolingians' approach to the past seems rather more similar to what might be found under the tenth-century Macedonians, or amongst Charlemagne's ninth-century contemporaries the ʿAbbasids, whose overthrow of the ʿUmayyad dynasty necessitated a comprehensive reformulation of identities: political, religious, and ethnic.[29] In other words, even when considering the Carolingian world or works from adjacent communities such as the *Liber Pontificalis* of Rome,[30] of Ravenna,[31] or even the *History* of Paul the Deacon,[32]

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26   The introductory essay to the planned six-volume series on Historiography and Identity is the essential starting place for this concept: Walter Pohl, "Historiography and Identity: Methodological Perspectives," in *Historiography and Identity I: Ancient and Early Christian Narratives of Community*, ed. Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, CELAMA 24 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 7–49.

27   A comparable situation is articulated in: Janet L. Nelson, "Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard," *Speculum* 60, no. 2 (1985): 251–93. Or, on an earlier era see: Helmut Reimitz, "The Early Medieval Editions of Gregory of Tours' Histories," in *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callandar Murray, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 63 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 519–65.

28   On the development of the Carolingian reform program see especially: "*Correctio*, knowledge, and power" in Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 292–380.

29   Ándras Németh, *The* Excerpta Constantiniana *and the Byzantine Appropriation of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbāsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London: Routledge, 1998).

30   Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber Pontificalis*, The James Lydon Lectures in Medieval History and Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

31   Edward McCormick Schoolman, *Rediscovering Sainthood in Italy: Hagiography and the Late Antique Past in Medieval Ravenna* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

32   Christopher Heath, *The Narrative Worlds of Paul the Deacon: Between Empires and Identities in Lombard Italy* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

nevertheless the *Chronographia* and the historical culture of early ninth-century Constantinople appears—at least at present—to be more *sui generis* in its era than not.

Identity is not the only analytical category from which this study has intentionally abstained. Productive, wide-ranging studies of (primarily Latin) historical discourses have also considered these discourses under such categories as: resources and use;[33] memory and remembrance;[34] transmission and exchange;[35] perception;[36] and, community-formation.[37] But it remains unclear which of these would be the most appropriate or productive for comparative analysis of and juxtaposition with the *Chronographia*. There is clearly much serious work yet to be done to establish the terms and the framework for such discourses. For instance, despite the obvious literariness of Constantinople, and of Byzantinists' predilection for working with original manuscripts, there is as yet no equivalent study to R. McKitterick's *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, and it is quite possible that there never will be.[38] Given the vastly different survival rates for early medieval manuscripts from the Carolingian world and from the Byzantine world, scholars working comparatively will need nuance and creativity to set commensurate terms for comparative study.[39]

Readers of the present study could find evidence for calling the *Chronographia* both Roman and Constantinopolitan. The work can be read as proposing an identity both internal and external to the center of political power. It is both ecclesiastical and imperial. Even the single most common summary statement that scholars have made about the identity promoted by the *Chronographia*—that it is an iconophile work—is surely true, and yet

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33 Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

34 Geoffrey Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: The West Frankish Kingdom (840–987)*, USML 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

35 Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne, eds., *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

36 Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

37 Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, and Richard E. Payne, *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

38 Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

39 For a starting point see: Teresa M. Shawcross and Ida Toth, eds., *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

it is also misleading. To take just one example, in R. J. Lilie's seminal article "Reality and Invention in Byzantine Historiography," the author discussed how Constantine V's birth was presented in the *Chronographia*. Lilie read the account through the lens of a "fervent advocate of the veneration of icons" seeking to denigrate Constantine V as "its most vehement adversary, a heretic, whom the chronicler vilifies accordingly."[40] And yet we have seen that reading the *Chronographia* as so characterized by an iconophile identity has caused even scholars such as Lilie to suppress the work's much greater vitriol for the iconophile emperor Nikephoros I. Furthermore, as we saw in chapter 8, reading the *Chronographia* through an iconophile identity causes one to miss the complexities that appeared in my close reading of the final entries covering AM 6303–6305 (our AD 810–813). This coda to the *Chronographia* teased out both a pro-icon position *against* the pro-icon emperor Nikephoros I, *and against* the dominant pro-icon faction in Constantinople (the Stoudite monks under Plato and Theodore of Stoudios). Adding to the complexity, when the entries for AM 6303–6305 were written a few years later, they did so in a way that reshaped that already-complex pro-icon position into an accommodation of the rule of the anti-icon emperor Leo V. Does the *Chronographia* promote an iconophile identity? Yes, but not exclusively. In short: little about the *Chronographia* easily accepts a label. Perhaps more importantly, labels seem little use in helping understand it and may yet directly obscure our vision.

This is not to say that there is no wider context for this Romano-Byzantine project. Framing the *Chronographia* through a descriptive method invites comparative and generalized observations, but along different lines. For instance, by following lines of communication it is possible to sketch the outlines of a textual community for the *Chronographia* which eschews any simplistic identification. The text's own terms to describe the forms which it communicated to and with its present world show us shared interests between the text and the implied readers of the narrative. For the *Chronographia* articulated a vision of a supra-political economy, or civilization: the Christian community and body of the οἰκουμένη.[41] The *Chronographia*'s idea of the present οἰκουμένη was enlivened by an expansive reanimation of a chronological order emanating through time. This chronological order was centered in space in Constantinople, but it was seen as radiating out into all the world: to Armenia,

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40   Ralph-Johannes Lilie, "Reality and Invention: Reflections on Byzantine Historiography," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 68 (2014): 166.

41   Walter Pohl and Ian Wood, "Introduction: Cultural Memory and the Resources of the Past," in Gantner, McKitterick, and Meeder, *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, 9.

to Persia, to Syria-Palestine under the ʿUmayyads, to the ʿAbbasids in Baghdad, to Italy under the Lombards, and to Francia and Rome under the Carolingians. Taking the *Chronographia* as a product of an entire intellectual milieu allows us to see the intended audience for the *Chronographia* superseding even the bounds of the Roman Empire.

This ecumenicity would seem to resonate with the fact that the *Chronographia* was constructed within an eschatological framework that operated within a shared web of meaning. Scholars have long connected the *Chronographia* with the region of Syria-Palestine but less emphatically with the deep tradition of Syriac historiography.[42] Nevertheless, this larger conceptual connection now seems obvious given the rich apocalypticism embedded in that tradition.[43] Furthermore, given the connections that have been established between the representation of the past in the *Chronographia* and the powerful Armenian networks of Constantinople, it will also be essential for future studies to set the work more directly in dialogue with the apocalyptic traditions of historical thought resonant in those communities.[44] Future paths for this work will be able to move beyond the older framework of apocalypticism as instigated by and framed around the advent of Islam,[45] and rather articulate the perspicacity and variety that J. Palmer has found in this progressive

42 Maria Conterno, "Theophilos, 'The More Likely Candidate?' Towards a Reappraisal of the Question of Theophanes' Oriental Source(s)," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 383–400; Robert G Hoyland, "Agapius, Theophilos, and Muslim Sources," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 355–64; Muriel Debié, "Theophanes' 'Oriental Source': What Can We Learn from Syriac Historiography?," in Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Studies in Theophanes*, 365–82.

43 Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. Dorothy Abrahamse (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Robert G. Hoyland, *Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, TTH 57 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011); Christopher Bonura, "A Forgotten Translation of Pseudo-Methodius in Eighth-Century Constantinople: New Evidence for the Dispersal of the Greek Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius during the Dark Age Crisis," in *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, ed. Nicholas S. M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki, and Lorenzo M. Bondioli, MM 46 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 260–76; Christopher Bonura, "When Did the Legend of the Last Emperor Originate? A New Look at the Textual Relationship between *the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and the *Tiburtine Sibyl*," *Viator* 47, no. 3 (2016): 47–100.

44 Kevork Bardakjian and Sergio La Porta, *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective*, Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha 25 (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

45 Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

model for historical thought, from the quotidian to the policy-forming.[46] Studying the apocalyptic through a range of genres reveals that the concept is not so much about the chronology of the end as the mentality of living with an ending. For we have found the progression of time not only embedded in the narrative of the *Chronographia* but in its multiple endings that tell of different ends for different times. That is, the *Chronographia* exemplifies both uses which L. di Tommaso distinguished in apocalyptic historical frameworks: an imperial or *insider* identity, and an oppressed, or *outsider* identity.[47] Both of these are embedded in a work which moved its point of view from that of persecuted rebels against the emperor Nikephoros I to denizens of the palace under Leo V. This flexibility is what made an apocalyptic framework so appealing to a chronographer seeking to comment upon imperial power, directly in line with what P. Ubierna has pointed out concerning the "politicization" of the apocalypse in the Syriac apocalyptic tradition into the eighth century.[48]

On the other hand, we might consider that the *Chronographia*'s explicitly apocalyptic concept of the historical eschaton coincides with its implicit constitution of its audience as a *people* within the framework of the "elect nation"—or to use the terms of the period, of God's Περιούσιος Λαός (Peculiar People).[49] This resonates with certain aspects of Carolingian self-conception in the same period.[50] A people joined together in their participation in and expectation of the revelation of truth and true time also connects to the implicitly apocalyptic practice of the liturgical thought and practice of the Eastern Mediterranean. If the historical apocalyptic is the grand end of all time, the liturgical practices which fulfill a constant practice of the end create a people synchronized in their sense and practice of the daily, weekly, and annual

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46   James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Christopher Bonura, "The Man and the Myth: Did Heraclius Know the Legend of the Last Roman Emperor?," *Studia Patristica* 62 (2013): 503–14.

47   DiTommaso, "Four Kingdoms of Daniel," 236–37.

48   Pablo Ubierna, "Syriac Apocalyptic and the Body Politic: From Individual Salvation to the Fate of the State. Notes on Seventh Century Texts," *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum* 6 (2012): 161–64.

49   Eshel, *Concept of the Elect Nation*, 63 and see further 139–84 for a comparative discussion.

50   Mary Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne," in Hen and Innes, *Uses of the Past*, 114–61. The Carolingian manifestation of this idea was developed into concepts that underwent an indelible transformation in its use for retrospective historical analysis via the so-called crusades. Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

fulfillment of time.[51] The liturgical paradigm has been shown to both form and critique the body politic.[52]

Finally, this study has worked to ask what expectations for truth and accuracy did the *Chronographia* set for itself and its original audience, and how did those work. It has been "concerned less with the accuracy of the past thus fashioned" than it has been concerned with what the *Chronicle*'s "various types of engagement [with the past] can tell us about the wider intellectual and cultural framework within which they took place."[53] In this way I have proposed new ways of thinking about the genre of early medieval chronography.[54] By assessing the work on its own terms I found the *Chronographia* cannot be understood if it is thought of as a way of telling history, for it is a way of telling time. Not, however, telling time in the sense with which scholars have been concerned up to now, primarily considering time in terms of the relative accuracy of the work as a report on events. On these terms, the *Chronographia* is a distinctly inaccurate and untrustworthy historical source. But this is not the sort of time that our chroniclers were after. Our chroniclers wrote in pursuit of the ends of time, of finding the meaning of the past in and for the present.

My method has thus been to set aside analytical categories in favor of describing practices. For it is less through categories of analysis than through the description of practices, and through hypothesizing the habits that shaped those practices and the habits which those practices in turn formed, that we might propose descriptions of past humans. Practices of reading and writing transmitted ideas, formed perceptions, ordered memories, and thereby constituted a community around a particular way of remembering, talking about, or writing the past. There is yet much work to be done to uncover the varieties of

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51   Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, Second Century BCE–Tenth Century CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Read, too, in this light: Rosamond McKitterick's *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

52   Mayke de Jong, "The Empire as Ecclesia: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical Historia for Rulers," in Hen and Innes, *Uses of the Past*, 191–226; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

53   Björn Weiler and Peter Lambert, "Introduction," in *How the Past Was Used: Historical Cultures, c. 750–2000*, ed. Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler, Proceedings of the British Academy 207 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

54   As a departure from the history of the chronicle genre offered by Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Tradition from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD*, vol. 1, *A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

ways in which the past was written and explained in Greek in the Early Middle Ages, the variety of groups who wrote and explained it, and the variety of ends which each pursued.[55] For now we are still in the middle, deeply embedded in the ongoing process of unveiling the variety of the past.

3   An End for the Future

"Men in the middest make considerable imaginative investments in coherent patterns which, by the provision of an end, make possible a satisfying consonance with the origins and with the middle."[56] Contrary to expectation, in positing an end that swallows all pasts an apocalyptic approach to the past relies on a recti-linear idea of time that actually permits of no ending. The end can neither be merely the next moment in a series of past moments, nor can it simply annihilate the past. The eschaton fulfills and re-integrates and completes all past times. As Frank Kermode famously put it, the unique chronos of the apocalyptic means that stories have "continually to be modified by reference to what is known." Such stories are "perpetually open to history, to reinterpretation."[57] This present middle necessitates a continual re-understanding of the past under the ballooning fullness of a now when all times are present and yet in the shadow of the about-to-be. This present turns the *imminent* end into *immanent* ends, the perspicacious pervasive presence of all times at once.[58]

Allegory, what I have discussed in this book as typology or *figural* thinking, is essential to this historical mode of thought for "the historical allegory is always having to be revised; time discredits it." Allegorical thinking is what allows apocalypse to be "disconfirmed without being discredited … its extraordinary resilience."[59] Indeed, as laid out in detail in the previous chapter it can "absorb changing interests, rival apocalypses," such as moving from the *end* that was the imperium of Nikephoros I to the *end* that was the new regime of Leo V and his resurrection of iconoclasm (so literally depicted in the *Chronographia* as the attempted resurrection of Constantine V from within his tomb within

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55   An exemplary effort in this direction has just appeared in Manafis, (*Re*)*Writing History in Byzantium*.

56   Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17. "If this is true of literary ends, it is also true of theological responses to apocalypse." Kermode, 24.

57   Kermode, *Sense of an Ending*, 5–6.

58   Kermode, *Sense of an Ending*, 25.

59   Kermode, *Sense of an Ending*, 8.

the church of the Holy Apostles). The sort of truth-making which accounts for the past in the present is not so much a discovery as a new creation.[60]

I have re-framed the *Chronographia*'s idiosyncrasies in the context of its express theories of chronology, historical narrative, and participatory reading as *The Ends of Time*. I did so in order to allow something of the work's genius to be understood on its own terms. I hope that unveiling the creativity and intelligence invested in this indelibly Byzantine work might finally permit the *Chronographia* to stand in its rightful place as one of the most complex and carefully constructed historical works of the Middle Ages writ large. There is the sort of historical accuracy which is a reliable roadmap of events on a time-line. There is also the sort of historical accuracy which is the significance of events, or moments, in the grand scheme of things, for the present moment. We are now trained to privilege the former, and exercise utmost caution in expressing the latter. This hierarchy is reversed in the *Chronographia*. Both its authors looked to make sense of the past by explaining the past in present terms, and as we have seen they were explicit and unapologetic in their insistence on this point. The *Chronographia* was created in order to change how its readers perceived and understood their present, and to then explicitly invite readers to bring it even further into their own renewed present. And to do so in a fully literal sense: to actually complete what was missing (ἀναπληρῶσαι τὰ ἐλλείποντα).

My distinction between *now* and *then* is not meant to adjudicate difference but to identify *différance*. Consider that despite its acknowledged importance as a source for the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in the seventh to ninth centuries, the jointly authored ninth-century *Chronographia* of George the Synkellos and Theophanes has resisted comprehensive readings. This is the case for a number of reasons. Modern scholarship has long been of two minds about the work: on the one hand acknowledging its importance, while on the other insisting that the *Chronographia* is ultimately a collection of historical excerpts and anecdotes without a unified narrative or thematic vision. Thus, though the *Chronographia* is well-known far beyond the field of Byzantine studies, no scholar has yet treated the work as a literary whole, nor has a study yet utilized this 'universal chronicle' as a source on the milieu that produced it.

As a result we have neglected to marvel at and appreciate how the *Chronographia* presented its truth. This is a loss. We can yet learn something with present benefit from how Early Medieval accounts of the past such as the

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60   "Humans of the past were no less clever than we, and may have indeed had to be cleverer."
       Tyler Lange, *Excommunication for Debt in Late Medieval France: The Business of Salvation*
       (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), xvi.

Chronographia explained the significance of past figures and events for their present.[61] For when we look up into the night sky we call what we see space. But we might just as well call it time. I would suggest that chronographers saw the past as present similarly to how we accept that an astronomer looks at the ancient emanations of stars as present light, though they do not see those stars as they are in the present but only via emanations long past. Even the light of *proxima centauri* now hitting our stratosphere is over four years old. The stable North Star of today's sky is in fact light emitted in our own AD 1700. Astronomers study the traces of the stars' pasts as pasts that are now present. The astronomer and the chronographer both make sense of how past is present. How is it here, and what does it tell us about the universe, about ourselves now, about ourselves to come? Just as the light emitted by the North Star is in our past, that past is in our present. Neither is the present that past's final end: there are futures that are past, pasts already here, and pasts yet still to come.

This is not merely an analogy. As I have argued elsewhere, the sister-science to chronography is not history but astronomy.[62] Or, as P. Varona has recently put it: the Byzantine chronographic tradition, like the Hellenistic, was "halfway between astronomy and history."[63] We have something to learn from the chronographers, and what we have to learn from them is not only scientifically important, it is politically urgent. History, our academic study of the past, no longer addresses itself to the synthesis of times. History, in formulating itself as an academic discipline, accepted a Newtonian supra-human time as an unquestioned given, as its chronological premise. Despite the emergence and acceptance of the general theory of relativity, History remained unconcerned with its Enlightenment-era idea of time. History has since silenced its ancient dialectic with students of time, and packed chronology away into the attic of antiquarian pursuits. Until recently.

Historians are now beginning to articulate the urgency with which humanity must devote itself to new chronologies. When S. Tanaka writes in favor of a *History without Chronology*, he advocates for a destruction of our reliance on Newtonian time and calls instead for a return to the sort of thinking about time and history in which (in the idioms of their own era) George the Synkellos and

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61   The Middle Ages and the Early Middle Ages in particular are overlooked by "theoreticians of cultural memory." Pohl and Wood, "Introduction: Cultural Memory and the Resources of the Past," 2.

62   Jesse W. Torgerson, "Time and Again: Early Medieval Chronography and the Recurring Holy First-Created Day of George Synkellos," in *Time: Sense, Space, Structure*, Presenting the Past 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 28–30.

63   Patricia Varona, "Chronology and History in Byzantium," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 58 (2018): 421.

Theophanes engaged. Tanaka and others call on us all to recover "the multiple times and various temporalities that simultaneously operate in our worlds."[64] The unique message of George and Theophanes' project, their chronography's grand but idiomatic synthesis of past and present, was for their own time, not ours. Their conclusions will not be ours, today. But that is not the point of my representations. I did not labor to translate this ninth-century work into the terminology of the twenty-first in order to resurrect it as a paradigm to follow literally, but as an allegorical type to be re-fulfilled. In the *Chronographia* I see creativity that is worthy of aspiration. The perspicacity therein, crossing every field of knowledge available, and the determination to construct a vision of the past in the present, is a perspicacity and a determination which we will need if we are ever to construct a new argument for who *we* could be. We can condemn the 'enlightened' colonizing ends which modern history writing long served, even as we deploy its narratives of universality to the work of greater justice.[65] The present study offers the image of the *Chronographia* as a type to be used in this work. Even though its vision of a universalizing political community is in many devastating ways an antitype, in important aspects the *Chronographia* can serve as a prototype if its image inspires us to pursue anew the past in the present. Perhaps this study might inspire students of time to write new pasts, pasts different from those which currently predetermine the possibilities of meaning in and for our own times. Nevertheless, if the reader can find that this study has at least uncovered something previously unseen, or provoked a question previously unasked, then it has fulfilled its purpose. Its end was merely to inspire new beginnings.

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64 Stefan Tanaka, *History Without Chronology* (Amherst, MA: Lever Press, 2019), 6. For a recent example of bringing past chronographers into discussion with modern physicists see: Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, "Lists, Originality, and Christian Time: Eusebius' Historiography of Succession," in Pohl and Wieser, *Historiography and Identity I*, 191–218.

65 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd ed., Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015); Priya Satia, *Time's Monster: How History Makes History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020).

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Modern Authors

Modern scholars are only denoted for appearances in the body of the text, not in the footnotes.

Ancient and Medieval Texts and Authors

Ancient and Medieval texts are only denoted for appearances in the body of the text, not in the footnotes.

Named Entities and Subjects

I have not indexed any entities whom or concepts which appear only in the footnotes. However, if a term indexed appears in both main text and footnotes, I have indicated appearances in both places.

For a number of concepts that appear throughout the text I have grouped several terms into a single entry, separated by slashes. This is not to indicate that these terms are synonyms, but since these terms are closely related in the Chronographia (*and hence in the argument of this book*) *I have done this to encourage readers who wish to follow up on one of them to do so in context with the entire group of related terms and ideas.*