Biography of a Landmark

The Chora Monastery/Kariye Camii in Constantinople/Istanbul from Late Antiquity to the 21st Century

Edited by Manuela Studer-Karlen

BRILL

Biography of a Landmark

Mediterranean Art Histories

STUDIES IN VISUAL CULTURES AND ARTISTIC TRANSFERS
FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO THE MODERN PERIOD

Series Editors

Hannah Baader (*Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence*)
Michele Bacci (*University of Fribourg*)
Gerhard Wolf (*Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence*)

VOLUME 7

Biography of a Landmark

*The Chora Monastery/Kariye
Camii in Constantinople/Istanbul from
Late Antiquity to the 21st Century*

Edited by

Manuela Studer-Karlen

BRILL

Cover illustration: Kariye Camii, Istanbul, Turkey, west façade. Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks fieldwork records and papers, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington D.C. Photo by Nicholas Artamonoff.

Contents

Robert G. Ousterhout (1950–2023)

Dedication and Acknowledgement

Just a few days before Robert G. Ousterhout passed away, he wrote to me: "I'm gratified that my last publication(s) return to the Chora, where everything began."

With Bob we lose a highly respected scholar of Byzantine studies and the leading expert on Chora Church, who always opened up new frontiers and whose efficient and precise way of working set a great example for all of us. We are struck with profound sadness, but also with an incredible sense of gratitude. This book is dedicated to a great scholar and, above all, to a dear friend. And although Bob was not privileged to hold the printed version in his hands, we will always think of him when we hold this book.

In August 2020, following the November 2019 order by the Turkish Council of State, the status of the Kariye Museum in Istanbul was reverted to that of a mosque. The former monastic church of Saint Saviour in Chora thus entered a new phase of its long history. This book considers the Chora from a transcultural perspective by retracing its continuous transformations in form and function from Late Antiquity to the present day. Rather than looking at monuments as living remnants of a lost world, the main goal is to develop approaches for analysing more deeply the dynamics through which historical landmarks are repeatedly reshaped and thereby gradually invested with new meanings.

Manuela Studer-Karlen

Figures

Notes on Contributors

Michele Bacci
is Professor of Medieval Art at the University of Fribourg and a member of the Academy of Europe. He is the author of numerous studies on artistic and cultural interactions in the medieval Mediterranean and beyond, as well as on the history of the religious practices associated with cult objects and holy sites. His books include *Il pennello dell'Evangelista* (1998), *Pro remedio animae* (2000), *Lo spazio dell'anima* (2005), *San Nicola il Grande Taumaturgo* (2009), *The Many Faces of Christ* (2014), and *The Mystic Cave. A History of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem* (2017). His new book, *Veneto-Byzantine Interactions in Icon Painting (1280–1450)* (in Greek), was published in 2021 by the Academy of Athens.

Glenn Bowman
initially trained in literary criticism with a focus on medieval pilgrimage before moving into social anthropology. In the early 1980s he lived for two years in Jerusalem's Old City, studying holy places and travelling with pilgrim groups. He subsequently became concerned with Palestinian identities under occupation, a topic entailing also examination of 'shared' holy places with attention to intercommunal relations. Cognate work followed in former Yugoslavia and on both sides of the Cypriot Divide. Although he continues his research in Palestine, he is retired and an Emeritus Professor in Socio-Historical Anthropology affiliated with the University of Kent, Canterbury.

Didier Clerc
studied classics at the University of Fribourg, where he obtained his PhD with a dissertation on Theodore Metochites's *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides*. His contributions focus not only on Metochites but also Lucian of Samosata, ancient Greek grammarians, and reception studies more broadly. He is currently a fellow of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences at the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin* (Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Munich).

Robert G. Ousterhout
was Professor Emeritus in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. He is the author most recently of *Visualizing Community: Art, Material Culture, and Settlement in Byzantine Cappadocia* (2017) and *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (2019), as well as co-editor of *Piroska and the Pantokrator* (2019), with

Marianne Sághy, and *The Holy Apostles: A Lost Monument, a Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past* (2020), with Margaret Mullett. His fieldwork has concentrated on Byzantine architecture, monumental art, and urbanism in Constantinople, Thrace, Cappadocia, and Jerusalem. Since 2011 he has co-directed the "Cappadocia in Context" graduate seminar, an international summer field school through Koç University, Istanbul. He was awarded the 2021 Haskins Medal by the Medieval Academy of America for *Eastern Medieval Architecture.*

Nadia Podzemskaia

is a research fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes, Paris). Her research intersects with philology, the history of art, and aesthetics. She has published widely on the theoretical writings of Wassily Kandinsky, including *Colore, Simbolo, Immagine. Origine della teoria di Kandinsky* (2000) and a complete annotated edition of *On the Spiritual in Art* in Russian and German (2020). Her work also concerns the reception in Russia of Leonardo da Vinci and the Italian Renaissance, the 1920s history of the State Academy of Artistic Sciences, Moscow, and the history of the Byzantine Library, Paris. She served as editor for the volumes *Leonardo in Russia* (2012), with Romano Nanni, and *Art is a Language – The Language of Art. GAKhN and Russian Aesthetic Theory of the 1920s* (2017), with Nikolai S. Plotnikov and Julija Jakimenko, as well as for the special journal issues "Art and Abstraction" (*Ligeia*, 2009) and "La Russie et l'Antiquité" (*Revue des études slaves*, 2016).

Athanasios Semoglou

was born in Thessaloniki, where he studied archaeology and art before pursuing his postgraduate work in Belgrade (Faculty of Philosophy) and Paris (Paris 1). He completed his doctoral dissertation at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, as a fellow of the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation. He is currently Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology in the Department of History and Archaeology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. His research interests include Byzantine and post-Byzantine iconography, mainly of the transitional periods, and the Byzantine murals at Mount Athos.

Manuela Studer-Karlen

is Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Professor at the University of Bern. Her research has been funded by fellowships from Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., the SNSF, and the Alexander S. Onassis Foundation, among others. Her first book dealt with representations of the deceased on early

Christian sarcophagi (2012). She is the recipient of the 2017 Franz Joseph II Liechtenstein Prize (University of Fribourg) for her habilitation work on Christ Anapeson, which was published in 2022. Her research centres on the history of visual-cultural processes in Late Antiquity, the interactions among text, image, and space in Byzantine churches, medieval Georgian art, and liturgy.

M. Baha Tanman
graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of the School of Architecture, Istanbul, and received his PhD from Istanbul University's Department of Art History. He is currently Emeritus Lecturer in the same department, as well as Scientific Committee Head for the Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation, Istanbul Research Institute. His research mainly concerns Turkish architecture from the period of the Anatolian emirates to the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

Introduction

Robert G. Ousterhout

When Ottoman Turks breached the walls of Constantinople on 29 May 1453, the first Christian shrine to fall was not Hagia Sophia but the Chora Monastery, which lay close to the Adrianople Gate.[1] Entering the church, soldiers found the venerated icon of the Theotokos, which had once been paraded along the walls to provide spiritual protection for the city. They cut the icon to pieces, but not in the interest of diffusing its miraculous powers (as we might imagine); they were simply dividing up its silver revetment as booty. They seem to have completely ignored the rich programme of mosaics and frescoes that decorated the church.

In this, they were not alone. Long after the church was converted to a mosque – which occurred sometime before 1511, after which it came to be known as the Kariye Camii – its interior decoration was left intact. Stefan Gerlach, a German ambassador, visited the mosque in the late 16th century and described the painted decoration in detail, noting only that a few faces, close to the viewer, had been scratched away.[2]

Away from the city centre and well off the beaten track, the building and its Byzantine decorations survived the Ottoman centuries (1453–1923) in obscurity. Rediscovered with the advent of Western tourism, the Kariye became known as the 'Mosaic Mosque' for its rich programme of mosaics – a must-see stop on the touristic itinerary, before visiting the dancing dervishes.

By the mid-20th century, the mosque was virtually abandoned and falling to pieces. Converted to a museum in 1945, the building and its abundant decorations were lovingly restored by the Byzantine Institute of America and the Dumbarton Oaks Field Committee between 1948 and 1958. Until recently, the museum was one of the most popular in Istanbul. Its mosaics bristle with beauty and elegance – all thanks to the building's knowledgeable and involved patron, Theodore Metochites, prime minister of the Byzantine Empire in the early decades of the 14th century and the greatest intellectual of his age.

---

1 Michael Ducas, *Historia Turco-Bizantina*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958), p. 363.

2 Stefan Gerlach, *Stefan Gerlachs dess Aeltern Tage-Buch* (Frankfurt, 1674), pp. 455–56; Robert G. Ousterhout, "A Sixteenth-Century Visitor to the Chora," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 117–24.

He provided both 'hothouse conditions' for the artisans as well as an unlimited budget. The surviving mosaics are complemented by extensive cladding in coloured marbles and a brilliantly painted funeral chapel – the latter uncovered in pristine condition in the 1950s. Not only is the art of the highest quality, it represents the most extensive Byzantine decorative programme to survive in Istanbul – justly compared to the contemporary artistry of Giotto or Duccio in Italy.

Unlike Hagia Sophia – which was very much in the news in 2020 because of its conversion from a museum to a mosque – the Kariye never held a significant political role during the Ottoman period. No important events took place there; no one important was buried there after the Byzantine period. Thus, it confounded everyone when, on 21 August 2020, President Erdoğan announced that the Kariye Museum, too, would be reopened as a mosque. There was no historical rationale, nor any public call, for this conversion. The transformation makes no sense at all – except in that the building represents the last of the Byzantine churches to have been converted to mosques and subsequently to museums in the city. Rather than reclaiming an important historical artifact of the Ottoman period – as one might argue for the case of Hagia Sophia – the re-conversion of the Kariye represents no less than a blatant attempt to erase Istanbul's rich Byzantine heritage. As of this writing, however, the Kariye is closed – and its fate remains uncertain.

It is worth remembering that the Byzantine Empire no longer exists. The year 1453 marked its end. One wonders why Mr. Erdoğan continues to fight a battle the Ottoman Turks won more than half a millennium ago, rather than addressing the more crucial problems his country now faces.

If nothing else, the threatened conversion of the Kariye has brought renewed scholarly interest, resulting in several recent symposia and the present volume, which derives from a virtual gathering of scholars in April 2021, "Biography of a Landmark. The Chora Monastery and Kariye Camii in Constantinople/Istanbul from Late Antiquity to the 21st Century," organized at the University of Fribourg by Michele Bacci, Alessandra Ricci, and Manuela Studer-Karlen.

I first became involved with the Chora as a graduate student in the late 1970s, when I undertook a dissertation – sight unseen – on its architecture (Fig. 1.1).[3]

This was the academic equivalent of a blind date, but, as I happily discovered, the building possessed both beauty and brains: the thrill of my first viewing has never faded. The building continues to fascinate: each visit reveals

---

3 Robert G. Ousterhout, "The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982).

FIGURE 1.1   View of Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, from the south
                PHOTO: ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

something new, often unexpected – a tribute to the Chora's underlying intelligence. I have returned to the Chora innumerable times throughout my career, in lectures, in publications, and, of course, in person. Still my favorite is to discuss the building and its decoration in situ with friends, colleagues, and students, enveloped by its magnificent art.

The building has been known to scholars since the 19th century and was of particlar interest to the Russians.[4] Wider interest in it developed following the mid-20th-century restoration by the Byzantine Institute of America and the Dumbarton Oaks Field Committee. The examination and documentation conducted at that time resulted in the massive three-volume publication by Paul A. Underwood, which appeared in 1966, supplemented by an edited

---

4   See the recent assessment of Elena Boeck, "First Encounters of a Chora Kind: Nikodim Kondakov and the Emancipation of Byzantine Art," in *Afterlives of Byzantine Monuments in Post-Byzanton Times*, ed. Elena Boeck (Bucharest, 2021), pp. 201–17. Nikodim P. Kondakov, *Mozaiki Mecheti Kakhrie-dzhamisi v Konstantinopole* [Mosaics of the mosque of Kariye Cami in Constantinople] (Odessa, 1881); Fedor I. Shmit, *Kakhrie-dzhami, Izvestiia Russkago Arkheologicheskago Instituta v Konstantinopole* 11 [Kariye Cami, Bulletin of Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople] (Sofia/Munich, 1906).

volume of essays in 1975. These superseded all previous publications and still stand as a historiographic landmark.[5]

Since that time, a long article by Øystein Hjort has examined the sculpture, and my own Dumbarton Oaks Studies monograph has addressed the architecture.[6] A variety of other studies have dealt with special aspects of the art and architecture and with the career of its patron. Several museum exhibitions have been organized in the United States and in Istanbul – by Holger Klein and Brigitte Pitarakis, as well as the present author – re-examining the project of the 1950s and its legacy, with related conferences, catalogues, and collected essays appearing between 2004 and 2011.[7]

There has also been renewed interest in the writings of Theodore Metochites, with a variety of his texts being published or discussed for the first time.[8] Of course, the sensibilities evident in the writing offer clues to the appreciation of the style and organization of the Chora, including its architecture and art.[9] They also help us to understand the political and scholarly concerns of the author.[10]

With so much already written about the Chora, one wonders if there is anything new to say. I certainly did, when invited to speak at the workshop

---

5   Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols (New York, 1966); idem, ed., *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (Princeton, N.J., 1975); these were preceded by regular annual reports in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.

6   Øystein Hjort, "The Sculpture of the Kariye Camii," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), 199–289; Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25 (Washington, D.C., 1987). I have also addressed the subject in several articles and two short monographs; see idem, "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76; idem, "The Virgin of the Chora: An Image and Its Contexts," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Leslie Brubaker, and idem (Urbana, Ill., 1995), pp. 91–108; idem, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (Istanbul/London, 2002); idem, *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons* (Nicosia, 2017).

7   Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout, eds., *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat. (New York, 2004); Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, eds., *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental Personalities* (Istanbul, 2007); Hoger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered] (Istanbul, 2011).

8   See most recently, Theodore Metochites, *On Morals or Concerning Education*, trans. Sophia Xenophontos, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Cambridge, Mass., 2020), pp. 279–82, with extensive bibliography of editions, translations, and studies of Metochites's writings.

9   For a recent attempt, see Markos Kermanidis, *Episteme und Ästhetik der Raummodellierung in Literatur und Kunst des Theodore Metochites* (Berlin, 2020).

10   Ihor Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time," in *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami*, pp. 19–55, remains foundational.

that formed the basis for this volume. I had begun to think I should open any new essay on the Chora by saying "Stop me if you've heard this one before" – there's a danger of repeating oneself too often, which I tend to do. Only after I'd begged off did I begin to realize that there is *always* something new to say about the Chora, as speakers at the conference demonstrated. The building and its art invite us to return again and again.

Among the new things I've learned from the symposium, perhaps most surprising is a new dating. Thanks to the expert sleuthing of Kostis Smyrlis, the generally accepted date for the restoration of the Chora (*c.*1315–21) should be adjusted half a decade earlier: the project was certainly completed before 1317, when its patron Theodore Metochites is first referred to as Megas Logothetes, a title he received only after the completion of the work at the Chora.[11] The title does not appear in the numerous inscriptions in the building; instead, he is identified simply as Logothete or Logothete of the Genikon. Moreover, Metochites was wealthy and thus in a position to refound the monastery considerably earlier than has been assumed. The revised date places the activity at the Chora much closer chronologically to the construction and decoration of the parekklesion at Pammakaristos Monastery (*c.*1310), which may have been a product of the same workshop.[12]

For those of us who thought we were celebrating the 700th anniversary of the completion of Metochites's project in 2021, this came as a shock – we were too late! We had assumed its date was fixed and immutable. But this wasn't the first time scholars were misled by the evidence. More than a century ago, Alexander Van Millingen read a decorative detail – no more than squiggles in an arched doorway, within the scene of the Wedding at Cana – as representing the Arabic numerals 6811, thus rendering a date of 1303.[13] This date, though frequently repeated, was disproved by Underwood in a lengthy rebuttal.[14] Instead, he posited a dating between 1315 and 1320/21 as most likely – which most of us accepted, until now.

Turning to the later history of the building and its use under the Ottomans, M. Baha Tanman demonstrated the promise of a deep dive into the Ottoman

---

11   See Kostis Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and his Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études Byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111. For the dedicatory inscription, see Underwood, *Kariye Djami,* 1:42–43.

12   As I suggested long ago, in Ousterhout, *Architecture*, pp. 119–20.

13   Alexander Van Millingen, *Byzantine Churches of Constantinople: Their History and Architecture* (London, 1912), p. 300.

14   Underwood, *Kariye Djami,* 1:15–16.

archives.[15] From the titles assigned to documents, he has identified several related to the Kariye. For example, he notes a curious incident of the theft of mosaics, recorded in 1870, as well as Kaiser Wilhelm II's documented visit to the building in 1898. There are mentions of restorations in 1875, 1893, 1896, and 1929.

An Ottoman survey of Istanbul, compiled in 1455 for Mehmed II, indicates the Chora monastery was abandoned at that time.[16] Much earlier data about the Chora was recently discovered in the archives of Vatopedi Monastery.[17] An Ottoman document records that Mara Branković (daughter of George Branković and wife of Murad II) purchased the Chora monastery shortly before her death in 1487.[18] In that year, she bequeathed the monastic complex to Vatopedi as a *metochion*. The text mentions an enclosure, and within it, an oblong building and twenty-four monks' cells; outside the enclosure, a windmill with an oven and a storehouse, as well as vineyards nearby. By the first decade of the 16th century, however, the church building had been converted into a mosque. This new information about the Byzantine 'afterlife' of the monastery has encouraged a reconsideration of its later history, including the dating of the tombs added in the parekklesion and outer narthex.[19]

Another area of interest is how the building might have been used liturgically during the Byzantine period. Considering its unusual, irregular plan, the tracking of liturgical movements within is not an easy task, as Paul Magdalino discussed in an unpublished paper (Fig. 1.2).[20]

For example, a typical cross-in-square church would have had three entrances to the sanctuary: a central one to the bema, and lateral ones opening from the side bays into the pastophoria. But the open design of the Chora naos (usually termed an 'atrophied Greek-cross plan') would not allow this, as the prothesis is not directly accessible to the naos. Thus, Magdalino suggests, processions could have utilized the north annex (which connects the prothesis

15   See in the present volume M. Baha Tanman, "The Adjustment of Chora Monastery to Ottoman Use."

16   Halil Inalcik, *The Survey of Istanbul 1455: The Text, English Translation, Analysis of the Text, Documents* (Istanbul, 2013), p. 310.

17   Jacques Lefort, et al., *Actes de Vatopédi III. De 1377 à 1500* (Paris, 2019), pp. 439–40. I thank Nicholas Melvani for this information.

18   Phokion P. Kotzageorgis, "Two Vakfiyes of Mara Brankovic," *Hilandarski Zbornik* 11 (2004), 307–22, esp. 221 and fig. 3.

19   See, for example, Nicholas Melvani, "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40.

20   Paul Magdalino, "The Chora Katholikon: A typical or extraordinary Byzantine monument?" presented at the symposium "Biography of a Landmark," April 2021. I am grateful to the author for sharing the paper with me.
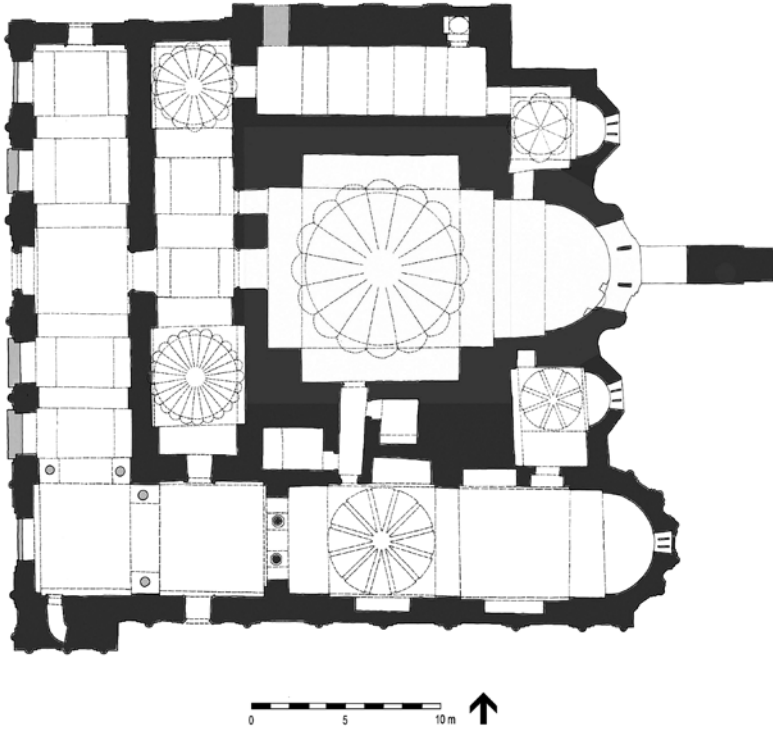
FIGURE 1.2   Plan of Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PLAN: ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

and the inner narthex) to re-enter the narthex for the Eucharistic liturgy. This would have added to the drama of the Great Entrance: the celebrants would disappear from view in the bema, only to reappear at the entrance to the naos, bearing the bread and wine.

This proposed path of movement might also help to explain something of the narrative arrangement of the Infancy of the Virgin in the inner narthex, a cycle which begins in the northernmost bay. That is, liturgical movement and narrative movement would have complemented each other. Similarly, I add, the arrangement of the narratives in the exonarthex begins at the north extreme, where a door connects to other (now lost) monastic buildings, probably including the trapeza.[21] Thus, the entrance of the monks from the monastery may have also reflected the movements of the narratives.

---

21   See my suggestions, in Robert G. Ousterhout, "Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 241–50.

Of course, there is much more to learn from close observation of the mosaics and wall paintings, particularly as the building is in the midst of a comprehensive restoration under the direction of the Central Conservation and Restoration Laboratory in Istanbul.[22] One question that still intrigues me is the style of the Chora. This was expertly addressed years ago by Otto Demus, whose analysis remains unsurpassed.[23] I have, in turn, used his study – with a touch of postmodernism – to explain the architectural style.[24] The conversation about style is far from finished, and I am hoping my colleague Robert Nelson will rise to the challenge. Style has fallen out of fashion among art historians, being superseded in the 1970s by social history and a more Marxist reading of art. Indeed, many found Demus's analysis to be already out of date when it appeared in 1975. How should the present-day scholar think about style, and do we have the necessary vocabulary to talk about it? Demus was taken to task for using terminology associated with more recent period styles (such as 'mannerist' or 'cubist') to describe developments in Late Byzantine painting. For the visually oriented, however, these terms call to mind specific stylistic associations that make sense – nevermind that Picasso had nothing to do with Macedonian painting. Still, it is hard to talk about the Chora and its art without a discussion of style, for its evocative style is as significant in conveying its meaning as is its iconography – both intimately connected to the mindset of Theodore Metochites.[25]

Iconography continues to fascinate, although most of the recent discussion continues to focus on its relationship to the liturgy and contemporary religious thought.[26] The iconography of the programme at the Chora may be just as solidly connected to the writings of Metochites.[27] Indeed, the building and

22   I am grateful to Dr. Olcay Aydemir for numerous discusssions about the ongoing work, in
      March 2020.
23   Otto Demus, "The Style of the Kariye Djami and Its Place in the Development of
      Palaeologan Art," in *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami*, pp. 107–60, originally written for
      the 1958 International Byzantine Congress. I am grateful to Robert S. Nelson for many con-
      versations on the subject. See also Bente Kiilerich, "Aesthetic Aspects of Palaiologan Art
      in Constantinople: Some Problems," in *Interaction and Isolation in Late Byzantine Culture*,
      ed. Jan O. Rosenqvist (Stockholm, 2004), pp. 11–26.
24   Robert G. Ousterhout, "Reading Difficult Buildings: The Lessons of the Kariye Camii," in
      Kariye Camii, Yeniden, pp. 95–128.
25   Kermanidis, *Episteme und Ästhetik*, passim.
26   For example, Rossitza Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance in the South Bay of the Chora
      Esonarthex," *Gesta* 48 (2009), 37–53.
27   See for a recent example, Nektarios Zarras, "Illness and Healing: The Ministry Cycle in
      the Chora Monastery and the Literary Oeuvre of Theodore Metochites," *Dumbarton Oaks
      Papers* 75 (2021), 85–120.

its art have been interpreted as self-extensions of the founder.[28] Metochites quite literally inserted himself into the programme, and his imperial pretentions are also evident in what has been termed its 'intervisuality' with Hagia Sophia.[29] Metochites's portrait continues to attract attention.[30] Other historical figures represented in the mosaics have garnered interest as well, including a previous donor and a previous founder. Prince Isaakios Komnenos, brother of John II Komnenos and a remarkable character as a patron of literature and art and one of the notorious bad boys of Byzantium, refounded the church in the 12th century and is represented in the Deesis mosaic.[31] Opposite Isaakios is a female figure, identified as 'the Lady of the Mongols, the nun Melane': another curious historical figure – an illegitimate princess married off to the Mongol khan – she is known to have donated a Gospel book to the Chora.[32] With growing interest in female patronage, I believe her role at the Chora has been exaggerated. More than anything, she fulfils a rhetorical function in the decorative programme, part of the 'gender symmetry' that promotes the role of the Theotokos in the economy of salvation and the dual dedication of the monastery.[33] Images of Christ are invariably balanced by pendant images of the Theotokos; the Infancy of Christ in the outer narthex is mirrored by the Infancy of the Virgin in the inner narthex; and miracles involving men are paralleled by those involving women.[34]

28   Paul Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and Constantinople," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden*, pp. 169–87, esp. 170–71.

29   Robert S. Nelson, "Taxation with Representation. Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22 (1999), 56–82; idem, "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

30   Nancy P. Ševčenko, "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et donateurs dans le monde byzantin*, ed. Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota (Paris, 2012), pp. 189–205.

31   For the life of Isaak, see Alexander Kazhdan, "Komnenos, Isaac the Porphyrogennetos," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), 2:1146; Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 2002), passim; Konstantinos Varzos, *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* [The Genealogy of the Komnenoi] (Thessaloniki, 1984), 1:79, 253.

32   Georgi Krustev, "A Poem of Maria Comnene Palaeologina from Manuscript No. 177 of the Ivan Dujčev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies," *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 71–77, esp. 73–75; Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The Place of the Nun Melania (the Lady of the Mongols) in the Deesis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 43 (1995), 163–80, esp. 177–78; Lee F. Sherry, "The Poem of Maria Komnene Palaiologina to the Virgin and Mother of God, the Chorine," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 43 (1995), 181–82.

33   Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, 1:27; Ousterhout, *Art of the Kariye*, 104.

34   As I argue in Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, pp. 27–29, 53–55.

Just as fascinating as who is represented in the Chora is who is not. Emperor Andronikos II, for example, who gave the commission and encouragement to Metochites and may have contributed financially to the renovation project, is nowhere to be seen, and there is really nowhere to fit him into the programme, aside perhaps from his titular saint in the exonarthex.[35] And although both the building and its decoration appear to engage in a dialogue with the past, it is Theodore Metochites who is doing all the talking. He honoured his predecessors, Isaakios and Melane, and respected their contributions to the monastery, but in the final analysis, they are included in the programme to honour him. The space opposite Metochites in the donor image is conspicuously empty. Metochites could place himself on equal footing with the emperor's illegitimate half-sister, or with a distant, disgraced ancestor, but he would always have to play second fiddle to Andronikos. In the Chora, he could express his imperial pretentions – but only to a certain point, beyond which they could have been seen as seditious.[36]

I've started to repeat myself yet again, so this is a good place to bring this essay to a close. Clearly, there has been much written about the Chora, but there is still much to be written. Each generation, I suspect, arrives with fresh eyes, new questions, and new methodologies. In sum, the Chora, its art, its history, and its patronage present us with an excellent case study to "think with" about the Late Byzantine world. The Chora provide a useful lens through which to view Byzantine culture – not simply its art and architecture, but also its literature, theology, ideology, and even urbanism. Just as important, its rich historiography also allows us to revisit our own growth as a scholarly field, offering a reassessment of how we read and how we see.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Michael Ducas. *Historia Turco-Bizantina*, edited by Vasile Grecu. Bucharest, 1958.
Stefan Gerlach. *Stefan Gerlachs dess Aeltern Tage-Buch*. Frankfurt, 1674.
Theodore Metochites. *On Morals or Concerning Education*, translated by Sophia Xenophontos (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library). Cambridge, Mass., 2020.

---

35   Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 179–81.
36   Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, pp. 53–55.

Secondary Sources

Boeck, Elena. "First Encounters of a Chora Kind: Nikodim Kondakov and the Emancipation of Byzantine Art," in *Afterlives of Byzantine Monuments in Post-Byzantine Times*, edited by Elena Boeck, pp. 201–17. Bucharest, 2021.

Demus, Otto, "The Style of the Kariye Djami and Its Place in the Development of Palaeologan Art," in *The Kariye Djami.* vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 107–60. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Hjort, Øystein. "The Sculpture of the Kariye Camii." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), 199–289.

Inalcik, Halil. *The Survey of Istanbul 1455: The Text, English Translation, Analysis of the Text, Documents*. Istanbul, 2013.

Kazhdan, Alexander. "Komnenos, Isaac the Porphyrogennetos," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 2:1146. Oxford, 1991.

Kermanidis, Markos. *Episteme und Ästhetik der Raummodellierung in Literatur und Kunst des Theodore Metochites.* Berlin, 2020.

Kiilerich, Bente. "Aesthetic Aspects of Palaiologan Art in Constantinople: Some Problems," in *Interaction and Isolation in Late Byzantine Culture*, edited by Jan O. Rosenqvist, pp. 11–26. Stockholm, 2004.

Klein, Holger A., and Robert G. Ousterhout, eds. *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat. New York, 2004.

Klein, Holger, A., Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, eds. *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental Personalities*. Istanbul, 2007.

Klein, Holger, A., Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, eds. *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered]. Istanbul, 2011.

Kondakov, Nikodim P. *Mozaiki Mecheti Kakhrie-dzhamisi v Konstantinopole* [Mosaics of the mosque of Kariye Cami in Constantinople]. Odessa, 1881.

Kotzageorgis, Phokion P. "Two Vakfiyes of Mara Brankovic," *Hilandarski Zbornik* 11 (2004), 307–22.

Krustev, Georgi. "A Poem of Maria Comnene Palaeologina from Manuscript No. 177 of the Ivan Dujčev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies," *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 71–77.

Lefort, Jacques, et al. *Actes de Vatopédi III. De 1377 à 1500*. Paris, 2019.

Magdalino, Paul. *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180*. Cambridge, 2002.

Magdalino, Paul. "The Chora Katholikon: A typical or extraordinary Byzantine monument?" Presented at the symposium "Biography of a Landmark," April 2021.

Magdalino, Paul, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and Constantinople," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 169–87. Istanbul, 2011.

Melvani, Nicholas. "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40.

Nelson, Robert S. "Taxation with Representation. Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22 (1999), 56–82.

Nelson, Robert S. "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul." PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "A Sixteenth-Century Visitor to the Chora," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 117–24.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25). Washington, D.C., 1987.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "The Virgin of the Chora: An Image and Its Contexts," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, edited by Leslie Brubaker, and Robert G. Ousterhout, pp. 91–108 (Urbana, Ill., 1995).

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 241–50.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Art of the Kariye Camii*. Istanbul/London, 2002.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Reading Difficult Buildings: The Lessons of the Kariye Camii," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 95–128. Istanbul, 2011.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons*. Nicosia, 2017.

Schroeder, Rossitza. "Prayer and Penance in the South Bay of the Chora Esonarthex," *Gesta* 48 (2009), 37–53.

Ševčenko, Ihor, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time," *The Kariye Djami*. vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 19–55. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Ševčenko, Nancy P. "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et Donateurs dans le monde byzantin*, edited by Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota, pp. 189–205. Paris, 2012.

Sherry, Lee F. "The Poem of Maria Komnene Palaiologina to the Virgin and Mother of God, the Chorine," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 43 (1995), 181–82.

Shmit, Fedor I. *Kakhrie-dzhami, Izvestiia Russkago Arkheologicheskago Instituta v Konstantinopole* 11 [Kariye Cami, Bulletin of Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople]. Sofia/Munich, 1906.

Smyrlis, Kostis. "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and His Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études Byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111.

Teteriatnikov, Natalia. "The Place of the Nun Melania (the Lady of the Mongols) in the Deesis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 43 (1995), 163–80.

Underwood, Paul A. *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols. New York, 1966.

Underwood, Paul A., ed. *The Kariye Djami*. vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Van Millingen, Alexander, *Byzantine Churches of Constantinople: Their History and Architecture.* London, 1912.

Varzos, Konstantinos. *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* [The Genealogy of the Komnenoi]. Thessaloniki, 1984.

Theodore Metochites between Conservatism and Innovation: Linguistic Approaches at the Chora through the Lens of the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides*

Didier Clerc

In Byzantium, rhetorical training based on the works of authors writing in the Attic dialect was an important part of the regular curriculum and opened the doors to a career in the high imperial (or ecclesiastical) administration.[1] Adherence to ancient Attic models (or μίμησις, 'imitation'[2]) was assigned such importance that some scholars have even questioned the ability of the Byzantines to represent their own reality.[3] Indeed, writings produced from the Archaic period to Late Antiquity provided the Byzantines with a rich repertoire of rhetorical formulae and ideas to use as models.[4] Writers of the Palaiologan period, in particular, are known for their outstanding ability to imitate: it took

---

1   See Costas N. Constantinides, "Teachers and Students of Rhetoric in the Late Byzantine Period," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, ed. Elisabeth Jeffreys (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 39–53.

2   On the concept of μίμησις, see Herbert Hunger, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Literature: the Importance of Rhetoric," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1979*, ed. Margaret Mullett, and Roger Scott (Birmingham, 1981), pp. 35–47; Ihor Ševčenko, "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose," in *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinisten Kongress, Wien 4.–9. Oktober 1981. Akten I*, ed. Wolfram Hörandner (Vienna, 1981), pp. 289–312.

3   See Cyril Mango, *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror* (Oxford, 1975); Sergey Averintzev, "Vizantijskaja ritorika" [Byzantine Rhetoric], in *Ritorika i istoki evropeyskoy literaturnoy traditsii* [Rhetoric and Origins of the European Literary Tradition] (Moscow, 1996), pp. 244–318. Both are mentioned by Jakov Ljubarskij, "How should a Byzantine text be read?," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, pp. 117–25, esp. 117–18.

4   See Antonia Giannouli, "Education and Literary Language in Byzantium," in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature,* ed. Martin Hinterberger (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 52–71, esp. 69.

scholars time to identify Thomas Magister as the true author of speeches that had long been attributed to Aelius Aristides, for example.[5]

This chapter examines the final prose work by Theodore Metochites, entitled (in an abbreviated form) the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides*. Metochites composed it during his very last years of life (i.e. between 1330 and 1332).[6] In 1228 Emperor Andronikos II and his protégé and counsellor Metochites were stripped of their power by Andronikos III. After a brief exile in Didymoteicho, Metochites was allowed back to Constantinople, where he spent his last days under house arrest at Chora Monastery.[7] Thus the Chora, where Metochites wrote his *Comparison*, becomes a place of culture and, more appropriately, of rhetorical erudition. Among the most influential ancient orators in Byzantium, Demosthenes and Aristides were both highly esteemed and often imitated on account of their rhetorical richness and the purity of their Attic language.[8] But did Metochites himself always adhere to the rules

---

5 See Antonio Rollo, "'Greco medievale' e 'greco bizantino'," *AION. Annali del Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico. Sezione linguistica* 30 (2008), 429–73, esp. 441–43.

6 See Eva de Vries-Van der Velden, *Théodore Métochite: une réévaluation* (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 259, 262.

7 On the last years of Metochites's life, see Ihor Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*, ed. Paul A. Underwood (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 17–55, esp. 24–55; Ihor Ševčenko, "Théodore Métochite, Chora et les courants intellectuels de l'époque," in *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World,* ed. idem (London, 1982), section VIII, pp. 15–39, esp. 23–36; de Vries-Van der Velden, *Théodore Métochite*, pp. 102–04.

8 On the reception of Demosthenes, see Craig Cooper, "Philosophers, Politics, Academics. Demosthenes' Rhetorical Reputation in Antiquity," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and Orator,* ed. Ian Worthington (London/New York, 2000), pp. 224–45; Philip Harding, "Demosthenes in the Underworld. A Chapter in the *Nachleben* of a *rhetor*," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and Orator*, pp. 246–71; Robert David Milns, "The Public Speeches of Demosthenes," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and Orator*, pp. 205–23. On Aristides, see Niels Gaul, *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der Frühen Palaiologenzeit* (Wiesbaden, 2011), pp. 175–81; Lorenzo Miletti, "Elio Aristide nella scuola tardoantica: commentari e trattati di retorica," *AION. Annali del Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico. Sezione di filologia e letteratura classica* 40 (2018), 58–85; Fabrice Robert, "Enquête sur la présence d'Aelius Aristide et de son œuvre dans la littérature grecque du IIᵉ au XVᵉ siècle de notre ère," *Anabases* 10 (2009), 141–60; John Vanderspoel, "Were the speeches of Aelius Aristides 'rediscovered' in the 350s p.C.?," in *Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and Its Times – Regards sur la Seconde sophistique et son époque*, ed. Thomas Schmidt, and Pascale Fleury (Toronto/Buffalo/London, 2011), pp. 189–98; Jean-Luc Vix, "Aelius Aristide, égal de Démosthène? Réflexions sur la réception d'Aristide à la Renaissance," *Dodone: Philologia* (*In memoriam Emmanuel Papathomopoulou*) 38–39 (2013), 433–52.

of ancient rhetoric? In his view, did ancient models prevail without exception over a more innovative style? The *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* offers excellent perspective on this matter, as it is at once a rhetorical piece and a technical work *about* rhetoric. The first aim of the present chapter is to identify some linguistic features of the *Comparison* that are consistent with traditional Byzantine teachings on rhetoric. The second is to assess the extent to which Metochites innovated at the Chora with reference to linguistic matters. Before taking into consideration these two specific topics, it is useful to catch a glimpse of the perception of Metochites's style by his contemporaries and to compare their views with respect generally to Atticism.

The Reception of Metochites's Style by His Contemporaries

It is well known that, some years before the appearance of the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides*, a quarrel arose between Metochites and Nikephoros Choumnos.[9] Though this dispute was motivated by personal reasons,[10] one of its major topics pertained to style: Metochites disparaged Choumnos because of the excessive 'clarity' (σαφήνεια) of his writings. For his part, Choumnos criticized Metochites's 'obscurity' (ἀσάφεια) and condemned his reluctance to imitate the style of ancient Greek authors such as Plato.

Considering the personal basis of the argument between Nikephoros Choumnos and Metochites, the former's opinion may not seem sufficiently objective. Yet, even Nikephoros Gregoras, Metochites's pupil, praised his master's erudition in his eulogy, only to rebuke his harsh style immediately afterwards:

> Probably only one thing could be criticized with regard to him [i.e. Metochites], namely, that he never wished to conform the representation of his style of writing to any of the ancient orators, and that he was never inclined to lighten the gravity of his thought by cheerful and pleasing language, nor to restrain with any bridle the abundance of his natural genius. Instead, in obedience to his own characteristics and laws, he puts forth, so to say, a storm and a sea of words. And, consequently, he

---

9 On this quarrel, see Ihor Ševčenko, *Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos. La vie intellectuelle et politique à Byzance sous les premiers Paléologues* (Brussels, 1962).

10 As Choumnos was removed from office, Metochites replaced him and became μεσάζων. On the personal and political background of their dispute, see Ševčenko, *Études*, pp. 145–66.

pricks and scratches the ears of the audience, as the thorn around the rose [pricks] the hand of those who try to pluck it.[11]

Gregoras claims that Metochites did not follow the 'laws' (i.e. the linguistic features) of ancient authors. Instead, according to the eulogizer, Metochites obeyed only his own judgement in matters of style, 'pricking' the audience with his verbosity and his peculiar wording. Modern scholars also tend to find Metochites's style inelegant and often puzzling,[12] but Gregoras's assessment – like that of Choumnos – is striking in its implication that the problematic character of Metochites's writing resulted from his neglect for the rules of Atticism.[13] Writing in compliance with ancient Attic authors was a requirement not only for literary works but also for scientific texts. Accordingly, for example, Gregory Akindynos speaks highly of Gregoras's work on astronomy for its Attic language:

I took it [i.e. Gregoras's treatise on astronomy], then, and studied its depth of meaning as well as its classical style and the flower of its vocabulary,

---

11   Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, ed. Immanuel Bekker, and Ludovicus Schopen (Bonn, 1829–55), 1:272 (my translation): Ἕν τι μόνον ἴσως αὐτοῦ καταμέμψαιτό τις, ὅτι πρὸς οὐδένα τῶν πάλαι ῥητόρων ἀναφέρειν βεβούληται τοῦ τῆς αὐτοῦ γραφῆς χαρακτῆρος τὴν μίμησιν, οὐδ' ἱλαρᾷ τινι καὶ μειδιώσῃ γλώσσῃ τὸ τῆς διανοίας παραμυθεῖσθαι ἐμβριθὲς, οὐδὲ τὸ τῆς φύσεως πάνυ τοι γόνιμον χαλινῷ τινι κατέχειν προτεθύμηται· ἀλλ' ἰδιοτροπίᾳ τινὶ καὶ αὐτονομίᾳ φύσεως κατακολουθήσας χειμῶνά τινα καὶ θάλατταν γλώττης προΐσχεται· κἀντεῦθεν ἀμύσσει καὶ κνίζει τῶν ἐπιόντων τὴν ἀκοὴν, καθάπερ τὴν τῶν τρυγώντων παλάμην ἡ περὶ τὸ ῥόδον ἄκανθα.

12   See Teodoro Metochites, *Saggio critico su Demostene e Aristide*, ed. Marcello Gigante (Varese/Milan, 1969), pp. 19–20; Ševčenko, *Études*, pp. 40–41. Gigante and Ševčenko offer a list of opinions on Metochites's style.

13   Börje Bydén, "Nikephoros Gregoras' Commentary on Synesius, *De insomniis*," in *On Prophecy, Dreams and Human Imagination,* ed. Donald A. Russell, and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath (Tübingen, 2014), pp. 166–67, rightly observes that Gregoras applies the simile of the pricking thorn also to the style of Synesius; see Nikephoros Gregoras, *Explicatio in librum Synesii "De insomniis." Scholia cum glossis*, ed. Pietrosanti Paolo (Bari, 1999), p. 127. He also notes that Gregoras (ibid., pp. 127–28) justifies Synesius's style on the same basis as Metochites does, i.e. that he was educated in Egypt; see *Semeioseis gnomikai* 17.1.1 in *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy: Semeioseis gnomikai 1–26 et 71*, ed. Hult Karin (Göteborg, 2002). Furthermore, in a letter to Demetrios Kabasilas on Synesius's *De insomniis*, Gregoras salutes the author's obscurity as the mark of a prophetic book; see letters 148 and 214–32 in Nikephoros Gregoras, *Epistulae*, ed. Pietro Luigi M. Leone (Matino, 1982–83), here in vol. 2. According to Bydén, Gregoras is not actually criticizing Metochites in his eulogy but instead covertly praising him for imitating Synesius's peculiar style. Although this is possible, I find it curious that Gregoras gives no grounds for Metochites's style, as he does overtly for Synesius's: Metochites seems to have no reason at all to write in such a way.

picked from the Attic meadow, and the variety of arguments from the Platonic treasures (unless I am altogether untrustworthy in such matters): in short, I may say, its whole graceful composition. I did not admire it as much as it deserves, not even nearly so, as I said before. Nevertheless, admire it I did to the best of my ability; then I passed it on to those who were eagerly asking for it, and they were many.[14]

Bearing in mind the statements of Choumnos and of Gregoras concerning Metochites's style, in the next two sections we shall identify the linguistic features of the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* that speak either against or in support of their opinion.[15]

Atticist and Archaizing Features in the *Comparison*

Many linguistic features of the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* would seem to refute the allegations of non-Atticism made against Metochites:

1.   In the *Comparison*, the Attic double tau is always employed instead of the double sigma.[16] A total of 49 instances of -ττ- are found in the text, 12 of them in the prologue.[17]

---

14   Translation by Angela Constantinides Hero. *Letters of Gregory Akindynos* 1, ed. eadem (Washington, D.C., 1983): Ἐγὼ δὲ παραλαβὼν καὶ διεξιὼν τό τε βάθος τῆς διανοίας τό τε τῆς ἑρμηνείας Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ τὸ τῶν λέξεων ἀνθηρὸν ἐξ Ἀττικοῦ τοῦ λειμῶνος καὶ ποικιλίαν ἐνθυμημάτων ἐκ τῶν Πλάτωνος θησαυρῶν (εἰ μὴ παντάπασιν ἄπιστος ἐγὼ τὰ τοιαῦτα) καὶ πᾶσαν, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, τὴν μεθ' ὥρας κατασκευὴν αὐτῆς, οὐχ ὅσον μὲν εἰκὸς ἦν, οὐδ' ἐγγύς, ὅπερ εἶπον, θαυμάσας δ' οὖν εἰς δύναμιν τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ, τοῖς σφόδρα ζητοῦσι – πολλοὶ δὲ οὗτοι – διέδωκα.

15   I hereafter cite the *Comparison* according to the text of Teodoro Metochites, *Saggio critico*, as that is the version available in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG). Nonetheless, I also take a new edition into account: Theodore Metochites, *Orationes,* ed. Ioannis Polemis, and Eleni Kaltsogianni (Berlin/Boston, 2019).

16   On the double τ as a mark of Atticism, see Wilhelm Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Philostratus* (Stuttgart, 1887–97), esp. 4:579, mentioned in Toma Magister, *La regalità,* ed. Paola Volpe Cacciatore (Naples, 1997), p. 17.

17   It is not entirely clear whether the prologue ends at chapter 5 (as suggested by Marcello Gigante in Teodoro Metochites, *Saggio critico*, pp. 20–21) or chapter 7. Laurent Pernot, *L'ombre du tigre. Recherches sur la réception de Démosthène* (Naples, 2006), p. 102, points out that the 'préambule' ends at chapter 5, but the comparison actually begins at chapter 8. I find chapter 7 to be a more convincing endpoint for the prologue; see Theodore Metochites, *Comparaison de Démosthène et d'Aristide. Introduction, traduction princeps, commentaire et études*, ed. Didier Clerc, forthcoming.

2.   The Attic εἰς is always used in place of ἐς.[18]

3.   The Attic suffix -θεν appears often throughout the text (30 instances).[19]

4.   Metochites opts for the spelling μικρ- rather than σμικρ-. μικρ- is found more frequently in the works of Attic authors,[20] whereas σμικρ- is a more ancient form, used in both Ionic and Doric dialects.[21]

5.   There are five instances of the deictic ι (οὑτοσί, οὑτωσί, νυνί), three of them in the prologue.[22]

6.   ἑάλων appears instead of ἥλων (chapter 2).[23]

7.   There is one instance of the Attic third-person singular of the personal pronoun οἱ (chapter 6).

8.   The grammatical number dual is intensively used, especially in the prologue (34 instances, supplemented by a further 35 in the text). One may argue that it is quite logical to apply the dual in a comparison between two orators. Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that the dual disappeared quite early from spoken language.[24] Thus, in this Metochites indeed employs an archaizing and elevated style.

9.   The same remark can be made about the optative, a verbal mood that Metochites uses quite extensively in the *Comparison* (95 times, 25 of them in the prologue alone).[25]

10. We find one verbal adjective (χρηστέον), another feature that was eliminated from spoken language.[26]

---

18   On this feature, see Schmid, *Der Atticismus,* 4:579, mentioned in Toma Magister, *La regalità*, p. 18.

19   See Toma Magister, *La regalità*, p. 18.

20   See the *Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell, Scott and Jones, s.v. μικρός, p. 1133.

21   See Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* (Munich, 1939), 1:310–11.

22   See Toma Magister, *La regalità*, p. 18.

23   Thomas Magister's influential *Ecloga vocum Atticarum* also recommends the use of the form ἑάλω, which he then considers as an Attic feature; see idem, *Ecloga vocum Atticarum*, ed. Fridericus Ritschl (Hildesheim, 1970), p. 146.

24   According to Antonius Nicholas Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar. Chiefly of the Attic Dialect …* (London, 1897), p. 101, the dual had already disappeared from spoken language by the end of the 4th century B.C.

25   Ibid., p. 450, points out that the use of the optative declined from the Hellenistic period onwards, though surviving until the 7th century A.D. According to Carlo Martino Lucarini, the optative is no doubt a mark of Atticism; see idem, "Erodiano e l'Atticismo," in *Erodiano. Tra crisi e trasformazione,* ed. Alessandro Galimberti (Milan, 2017), pp. 3–37, esp. 4.

26   See Erich Trapp, "The Role of Vocabulary in Byzantine Rhetoric as a Stylistic Device," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium*, pp. 137–49, esp. 146–47.

11.   The dative, which likewise disappeared from spoken language,[27] is used
       extensively throughout the *Comparison*.[28]

12.   The Attic form ἀνύτω (five occurrences) is always used instead of ἀνύω. It
       is striking to note that in his other works Metochites oscillates between
       the two. Therefore, the language of the *Comparison* seems to show par-
       ticular care.

13.   Metochites follows the lexica of Herodian and Thomas Magister in
       employing the expression γέλως πλατύς ('loud laughter') rather than
       γέλως πολύς.[29] Although, according to the *Greek-English Lexicon* by
       Liddell, Scott and Jones (*LSJ*, s.v. γέλως I), the turn of phrase γέλως πλατύς
       "is not classical," Metochites merely demonstrates compliance with the
       phraseology that was considered Attic and thus correct.[30]

14.   Finally, in the *Comparison*, the Attic γιγν- is found much more often
       (17 occurrences) than the simple γιν- (two occurrences, never in the pro-
       logue), which prevails in Koine Greek.[31]

To sum up these findings: Metochites applies many linguistic features that can
be described as conservative or as adhering to how a Byzantine intellectual
was expected to write, that is, in accordance with the language of ancient Attic
authors. After all, in chapter 31 of the *Comparison*, he refers to Demosthenes
as "the legislator ... and guide ... of the art of oratory."[32] This is expressive of
his opinion that Aristides and all future generations had only to follow the
path of this great Attic orator, and in general the path of classical authors. And
this position is consistent with his own wide use of archaizing and Atticizing
language.

---

27   See Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, pp. 325–27, 341–47.

28   On the use of dative by Byzantine authors as a feature of Atticism, see Staffan Wahlgren,
      "Case, Style and Competence in Byzantine Greek," in *The Language of Byzantine Learned
      Literature*, ed. Martin Hinterberger (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 170–75. In his study, Wahlgren
      points out that, despite its gradual vanishing from spoken language, the dative appears
      even more often among Byzantine authors than the Attic authors themselves. This phe-
      nomenon suggests that the Byzantines perceived the dative to be another archaizing lin-
      guistic element.

29   See Herodian, *Philetaerus* 180, ed. Alphonse Dain (Paris, 1954); Thomas Magister, *Ecloga
      vocum Atticarum*, p. 293 follows him.

30   Two similar cases relate to the use of ἀμηγέπη and εὐκολία. The former is an Attic word,
      according to Herodian, *De prosodia catholica* 3.1.489, ed. Augustus Lentz (Leipzig, 1878).
      Thomas Magister explains the meanings of εὔκολος in his *Ecloga vocum Atticarum*, p. 107.

31   On -γν- instead of -ν- as a mark of Atticism, see Sonja Gammage, *Atticism in Achilles Tatius:
      An Examination of Linguistic Purism in Achilles Tatius' "Leucippe and Clitophon"* (PhD diss.,
      University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2018), pp. 90–93.

32   νομοθέτης ... καὶ ἡγεμὼν ... τῆς τέχνης.

Non-Attic or Non-Classical Words in the *Comparison*

Considering the above list of evidence, some of Choumnos's and Gregoras's accusations may seem unwarranted. However, the *Comparison* demonstrates certain linguistic features that run counter to the Attic idiom, thus supporting their view:

1   *Accentuation*
   a. As seen above (point 13), Metochites usually follows the recommendations of the Atticist lexica. However, in chapter 11 of the *Comparison* we find the proparoxytone word τρόπαιον ('trophy'). Many lexica identify the properispomenon word τροπαῖον as the proper Attic form.[33] Here, Metochites does not accord with the precepts of the lexica but rather with the most common wording: according to the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (*TLG*), τρόπαιον is far more frequently used than τροπαῖον. Thus, in some cases, the widespread usage of a non-Attic form could legitimize its employment,[34] even in a comparison between two authors writing in the Attic dialect.

2   *Non-Classical Words*
   a. In chapter 9 of the *Comparison*, we find the participle συναεθλεύων, from the rare Byzantine verb συναεθλεύω.[35] According to the *TLG*, the noun συναεθλευτής and the verb συναεθλεύω appear only nine times in all of Greek literature (the first time being in the work of Eustathios of Thessaloniki).[36] However, the noun συνάεθλος (which the *LSJ* translates

---

33   Herodian, *De prosodia catholica* 3.1.369; Arcadius, *Epitome of Herodian's "De prosodia catholica,"* ed. Stephanie Roussou (Oxford, 2018), p. 138; *Scholia in Dionysii Thraci Artem grammaticam*, ed. Alfredus Hilgard (Leipzig, 1901), p. 131; Ioanni Tzetzae, *Commentarii in Aristophanis "Plutum,"* line 705, ed. Lydia Massa Positano, et al. (Groningen, 1960). Others regard τρόπαιον as a more recent form than τροπαῖον; see *Scholia Graeca in Aristophanis "Thesmophoriazusas,"* line 697, ed. Friedrich Dübner (Hildesheim, 1969); *Scholia in Thucydidem ad optimos codices collata* 1.30.1, ed. Carolus Hude (Leipzig, 1927).

34   On this principle, see Stefano Valente, "Old and New Lexica in Palaeologan Byzantium," in *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek,* ed. Andrea Massimo Cuomo, and Erich Trapp (Turnhout, 2017), pp. 45–55, esp. 54.

35   On this verb, see the *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität*, which mentions this passage of the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* and translates as 'sich zusammen mühen'.

36   Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homeri "Iliadem" pertinentes*, ed. Marchinus van der Valk, 4 vols (Leiden, 1971–87), here 3:124.

as 'fellow-toiler') already appears among the writings of authors of Late Antiquity.[37]

b. Next, we may consider the name ἐκτόκια, ('products'), which appears in chapter 14. The word ἐκτόκιον is first found in the output of Metochites's contemporaries, but once again its root (< τίκτω, 'give birth to/produce' + prefix ἐκ-, 'out') renders it perfectly comprehensible as well as consistent with the ancient Greek language.

c. The same remark can be made about the word δονακίσκον (chapter 22). According to the TLG, it is only seen twice in all of Greek literature, that is, by Metochites and by another Byzantine author, Niketas Choniates.[38] Nonetheless, it is clear that this is the diminutive of the ancient term δόναξ (the 'reed' used, for example, as a writing instrument),[39] which is already used by Homer (e.g. *Il.* 10,467).[40] In addition, the use of the diminutive could be justified by the fact that, according to Eustathios of Thessaloniki,[41] the δόναξ is smaller than another reed, the κάλαμος.[42]

d. Concerning the word λαμυρότης (chapter 29), a preliminary remark is necessary. In his 1969 edition, Marcello Gigante emends λαμυρότητι, which appears in the manuscript, to λαμπρότητι (perhaps in accordance with chapter 30, in which the latter term actually occurs).[43] However, already before him Ihor Ševčenko had spoken in favor of the text transmitted by the manuscript (λαμυρότητι),[44] and Ioannis Polemis and Eleni Kaltsogianni have also maintained this reading of the manuscript in their recent edition (2019). The word λαμυρότης is indeed very rare (five occurrences according to the TLG, six if we count the one in the *Comparison* itself) and first appears in the 12th century. In this respect, λαμυρότης

---

37 According to the TLG, the first occurrence of this noun is to be found in Oppian, *Cynegetica* 1.195 and 4.379; see *Oppian, Colluthus, Tryphiodorus*, ed. Mair Alexander William (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

38 Nicetae Choniatae, *Historia*, ed. Jan van Dieten (Berlin, 1975), p. 439.

39 Although Thomas Magister states that the δόναξ is not a writing instrument, thus differentiating it from the κάλαμος; see idem, *Ecloga vocum Atticarum*, p. 201.

40 On the ancient diminutive -ίσκ-, see Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, pp. 291–92.

41 Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Commentarii ad Homeri "Iliadem"*, 3:113 and 4:264.

42 See also the *Scholia in Euripidis "Orestem"*, line 146, in *Scholia Graeca in Euripidis tragoedias*, ed. Gulielmus Dindorf (Oxford, 1863).

43 Both λαμυρότητι and λαμπρότητι are written on fol. 363v of the manuscript of the *Comparison*. This work is preserved only in the codex Vindobonensis philologicus graecus 95. On this manuscript, see Herbert Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, vol. 1, *Codices historici, codices philosophici et philologici* (Vienna, 1961), pp. 202–04; Ševčenko, *Études*, p. 179.

44 Ševčenko, *Études*, p. 38, n. 1.

is not a classical word, but it is a calque of both the adjective λαμυρός (*LSJ* 'gluttonous / impudent / charming / bright'), which is first found in Xenophon, and the noun λαμυρία, which appears many times in Plutarch (*LSJ* 'wantonness / pertness'), an author whom Metochites esteemed highly.[45]

e. The word τήβενον (chapter 33) is also corrected by Gigante as τήβεννον ('toga'). τήβεννος is the form used since Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but τήβενος is also attested in the *Suidae lexicon*.[46]

3   *Hapax legomena*

The previous examples are all rare, or very rare, words employed by Byzantine authors and are therefore non-classical words. Moreover, in the *Comparison* there are four *hapax legomena*. This is particularly notable given that it is remarkable to find even one *hapax* in a text longer than the *Comparison*.

a. One first encounters the word γλωττοστροφίαν (chapter 10). The word means the 'ability to turn the tongue', that is, the ability to speak in a treacherous way, as sophists are often accused of. The noun γλωττοστροφία is indeed a *hapax legomenon*, but the corresponding verb γλωττοστροφέω already appears in Aristophanes's *Clouds* (v. 792).

b. The compound ἀρτιόχρειος (chapter 19) is used in other works by Metochites.[47] Nonetheless, it does not appear among the writings of other authors nor in the *LSJ*. The meaning 'suitable, consistent, in accordance with' could be added to the one given by the *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* (*LBG*), namely, 'sehr nützlich'. If the form of the word is

---

45   On Metochites's admiration for Plutarch, see Sophia Xenophontos, "The Byzantine Plutarch: Self-Identity and Model in Theodore Metochites' Essay 71 of the *Semeioseis Gnomikai*," in *The Afterlife of Plutarch,* ed. John North, and Peter Mack (London, 2018), pp. 23–39. In addition, Metochites also wrote a treatise about Xenophon (*Semeioseis gnomikai* 20, ed. Hult).

46   *Suidae lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1928–35); here 3:299 (λ 834). The *TLG* online version of Neophytos Ducas, Ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς τινὰς ἐν διαφόροις περιστάσεσι ὑπὸ Νεοφύτου Δούκα 335 (Aegina, 1835) has also τήβενον, although the printed version (p. 158) has τήβεναν (with one ν instead of the more conventional two). Most importantly, see also *Suidae lexicon* 4:537 (τ 464 and 465): even though the two lemmas are Τήβεννος, the critical apparatus by Adler shows that some manuscripts give the form Τήβενος.

47   According to the *TLG*, except for the occurrence in the *Comparison*, the word ἀρτιόχρειος appears in the following texts: Theodore Metochites, *Orationes*, 17.13; idem, *Carmina*, 6,156, ed. Ioannis Polemis (Turnhout, 2015); idem, Βυζάντιος ἢ περὶ τῆς βασιλίδος μεγαλοπόλεως 40, ed. Ioannis Polemis (Thessaloniki, 2013). Moreover, Gigante draws attention to the three occurrences in Theodore Metochites, *Miscellanea*, ed. Christianus Müller, and Theophilus Kiessling (Leipzig, 1821), pp. 527, 663, and 735; see Teodoro Metochites, *Saggio critico*, ad loc.

indeed innovative, the meaning suggested here is not: in fact, it is the first meaning of ἄρτιος offered by the LSJ.

c. As for the next *hapax*, Ἀρεϊκώτερος (chapter 29) appears only here and in Metochites's *Byzantius* (14). It is the comparative related to the adverb Ἀρεϊκῶς, thus meaning 'in a manner even more appropriate to the god of war Ares'. As both the adverb Ἀρεϊκῶς and the adjective Ἀρεϊκός appear in texts written during the Late Antiquity, Metochites's readers may well be surprised by the unprecedented comparative Ἀρεϊκώτερος, but they can hardly be really puzzled.

d. The last *hapax* is ἀπορρυπτεῖσθαι (chapter 29). The verb ἀπορρυπτέω does not appear in the LSJ, but the LBG rightly refers the reader to the lemma ἀπορρύπτω in the LSJ ('cleanse thoroughly').

The above-mentioned words are neither ancient nor properly Attic and share common characteristics such as rarity and intelligibility. In addition, as Ševčenko put it, they 'twist' the "rules of rhetorical composition," i.e. of the style and expression of ancient authors.[48] Metochites thus sets up a linguistic game, aiming to present the reader with a vocabulary that is easily comprehensible yet involves a slight transgression with regard to the ancient forms. This makes his style – to some extent – innovative.[49]

Stylistic Auto-Legitimization in the *Comparison*

As shown above, Metochites makes use of a composite style, alternating Attic and archaizing language with certain non-Attic and more recent, or even completely new, words. Although the newer terminology Metochites employed would have been comprehensible to readers knowledgeable in ancient Greek, his contemporaries did not hesitate to censure him for not adopting more conventional wordings.

In this respect, the *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* seems to be a stylistic self-apology.[50] Indeed, even for his last rhetorical piece, Metochites continued using his peculiar mixed style – partly conservative and partly

---

48   Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 44–45.
49   On Metochites's stylistic innovation, see ibid., pp. 44–45; Trapp, "The Role of Vocabulary," p. 140.
50   The *Comparison* is not the only self-apology among Metochites's works. For the treatise on Plutarch (*Semeioseis gnomikai* 71) as an "indirect apology for himself" and his choices in life, see Xenophontos, "The Byzantine Plutarch," p. 38.

innovative. Moreover, in the *Comparison* he characterizes both Demosthenes and Aristides as innovators, thus seeking to legitimize his own style through the example of the two renowned orators.

In chapter 19, Demosthenes is said to be "very innovative" (μάλιστα καινισθέντα) in his use of figures of speech and of all common rhetorical means, which he employs "at every occasion at the most proper time" (ἐν παντὶ τῷ παραστάντι κάλλιστ' ἐν καιρῷ). Metochites looks to Demosthenes's novel style to empower his own: Who would blame Metochites for innovating, if Demosthenes himself (so says the author) introduced originality in his speeches?

But another question arises, then: How far can innovation go with regard to the art of oratory? Metochites answers while addressing Aristides's alleged originality:

> While innovating [καινίσας] many times … in respect to the art of oratory, … Aristides demonstrates shrewdness and agility in this discipline, but even so he keeps a firm grip on those ancient rules, and he does not abandon his respect [for them], … being proud of the dignity of his style, [which is] rough for the lips to express and harsh for the ears to hear.[51]

In light of the above evidence, this description of the style of Aristides can be seen to be applicable to Metochites himself. In particular, the latter's self-apology concerns tradition and innovation as well as harshness, for which Gregoras denounced him. As Metochites states in the passage just quoted, harshness and innovation are marks of a dignified style; the condition is that innovation must remain well grounded and consistent with the language of ancient authors. Thus, the 'ancient rules' can be bent, but not completely ignored, forgotten, or refuted. By using a mixed style in his *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides*, Metochites adopts precisely this linguistic approach – an approach he considers praiseworthy.

---

51   Teodoro Metochites, *Saggio critico* 27 (my translation): Καὶ πολλὰ γὰρ καινίσας … ἐπὶ τῇ τέχνῃ, … τὸ ἀγχίνουν μὲν καὶ τὴν εὐφορίαν ἐντεῦθεν προδείκνυσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ οὕτως ἀπρὶξ ἔχεται τῶν προτέρων ἐκείνων νομίμων καὶ τῆς εὐλαβείας τῆσδ' οὐκ ἐξίσταται …, ἀκόμψῳ τοῖς χείλεσιν ἐρεῖν καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκοῦσαι τῆς ἑρμηνείας ἀξιώματι σεμνυνόμενος.

Conclusion

The *Comparison of Demosthenes and Aristides* contains many linguistic features that are perfectly consistent with the expectations of a learned Byzantine audience. Metochites is careful to adopt a refined and Atticizing style to impress the reader by adhering to linguistic standards that all contemporary intellectuals shared. Chora Monastery, where Metochites wrote the *Comparison* at the end of his life, became in this respect a place of high erudition, in which ancient writings were preserved and reanimated through close imitation.

Nevertheless, Metochites was critiqued by friends and foes alike for his peculiar style. But his interspersing of recent words and personal linguistic coinages was reflective of his approach to innovation: he considered originality to be a welcome feature of the art of oratory, but one that must never break the old rules of that art; it should not go beyond the limits of comprehension and reason with regard to ancient Greek language. For instance, as the word δόναξ (denoting a 'reed' that is smaller than a κάλαμος) was used by ancient authors and -ισκ- denoted a diminutive already in antiquity, why, then, should the diminutive δονακίσκος not exist? Or why should the noun γλωττοστροφία not be used, if Aristophanes applied the corresponding verb γλωττοστροφέω in one of his verses? The recent and rare words, as well as the *hapax legomena*, that Metochites employs in his *Comparison* are indeed striking and worthy of study, but they are far from puzzling.

Metochites sought to legitimize his own innovative style by arguing that Demosthenes and Aristides themselves had innovated, as far as language was concerned. Thus, writing at the Chora at the end of his life, Metochites advocated a style that, though novel in regard to some features, took the old one into account, respected it, and built upon it in a consistent and harmonious way.

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Dictionaries and Research Resources

Jannaris, Antonius Nicholas. *An Historical Greek Grammar. Chiefly of the Attic Dialect …* London, 1897.

LBG = Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität [online], edited by Trapp Erich. Vienna, 1994–2017.

LSJ = Greek-English Lexicon, edited by Liddell Henry George, Scott Robert, and Jones Henry Stuart. Oxford, 1996.

Schmid, Wilhelm. *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Philostratus*, 5 vols. Stuttgart, 1887–97.

Schwyzer, Eduard. *Griechische Grammatik*, 3 vols. Munich, 1939–53.

TLG = Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. A Digital Library of Greek Literature [online], edited by Pantelia Maria.

Primary Sources

Arcadius. *Epitome of Herodian's "De prosodia catholica,"* edited by Stephanie Roussou. Oxford, 2018.

Eustathios of Thessaloniki. *Commentarii ad Homeri "Iliadem" pertinentes*, edited by Marchinus van der Valk, 4 vols. Leiden, 1971–87.

Herodian. *De prosodia catholica*, edited by Lentz Augustus. Leipzig, 1878.

Herodian. *Philetaerus*, edited by Dain Alphonse. Paris, 1954.

Ioanni Tzetzae. *Commentarii in Aristophanem*, edited by Massa Positano Lydia, Holwerda Douwe, and Koster Wilhelm Johannes Wolf. Groningen, 1960.

Letters of Gregory Akindynos, edited by Constantinides Hero Angela. Washington, D.C., 1983.

Neophytos Ducas. Ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς τινὰς ἐν διαφόροις περιστάσεσι ὑπὸ Νεοφύτου Δούκα. Aegina, 1835.

Nicetae Choniatae. *Historia*, ed. van Dieten Jan. Berlin, 1975.

Nikephoros Gregoras. *Epistulae*, edited by Pietro Luigi M. Leone. Matino, 2 vols, 1982–83.

Nikephoros Gregoras. *Explicatio in librum Synesii "De insomniis." Scholia cum glossis*, edited by Pietrosanti Paolo. Bari, 1999.

Nikephoros Gregoras. *Historia Romana*, edited by Bekker Immanuel, and Schopen Ludovicus, 3 vols. Bonn, 1829–55.

Oppian, Colluthus, Tryphiodorus, edited by Mair Alexander William. Cambridge, Mass., 1963.

Scholia Graeca in Aristophanis "Thesmophoriazusas," edited by Dübner Friedrich. Hildesheim, 1969.

Scholia Graeca in Euripidis tragoedias, edited by Dindorf Gulielmus. Oxford, 1863.

Scholia in Dionysii Thraci Artem grammaticam, edited by Hilgard Alfredus. Leipzig, 1901.

Scholia in Thucydidem ad optimos codices collata, edited by Hude Carolus. Leipzig, 1927.

Suidae lexicon, edited by Adler Ada, 4 vols. Leipzig, 1928–35.

Theodore Metochites. *Comparaison de Démosthène et d'Aristide. Introduction, traduction* princeps*, commentaire et études*, edited by Clerc Didier (forthcoming).

Theodore Metochites. *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy: Semeioseis gnomikai 1–26 et 71*, edited by Hult Karin. Göteborg, 2002.

Theodore Metochites. *Carmina*, edited by Polemis Ioannis. Turnhout, 2015.

Theodore Metochites. *Βυζάντιος ἢ περὶ τῆς βασιλίδος μεγαλοπόλεως*, edited by Polemis Ioannis. Thessaloniki, 2013.

Theodore Metochites. *Miscellanea*, edited by Müller Christianus, and Kiessling Theophilus. Leipzig, 1821.

Theodore Metochites. *Orationes*, edited by Polemis Ioannis, and Kaltsogianni Eleni. Berlin/Boston, 2019.

Teodoro Metochites. *Saggio critico su Demostene e Aristide*, edited by Marcello Gigante. Varese/Milan, 1969.

Thomas Magister. *Ecloga vocum Atticarum*, edited by Ritschl Fridericus. Hildesheim, 1970.

Toma Magister. *La regalità*, edited by Volpe Cacciatore Paola. Naples, 1997.

Secondary Sources

Averintzev, Sergey. "Vizantijskaja ritorika" [Byzantine Rhetoric], in *Ritorika i istoki evropeyskoy literaturnoy traditsii* [Rhetoric and Origins of the European Literary Tradition], pp. 244–318. Moscow, 1996.

Bydén, Börje. "Nikephoros Gregoras' Commentary on Synesius, *De insomniis*," in *On Prophecy, Dreams and Human Imagination*, edited by Donald A. Russell, and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, pp. 163–88. Tübingen, 2014.

Constantinides, Costas N., "Teachers and students of rhetoric in the late Byzantine period," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*, edited by Elisabeth Jeffreys, pp. 39–53. Aldershot, 2003.

Cooper, Craig, "Philosophers, Politics, Academics. Demosthenes' rhetorical reputation in antiquity," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and orator,* edited by Ian Worthington, pp. 224–45. London/New York, 2000.

de Vries-Van der Velden, Eva. *Théodore Métochite: une réévaluation.* Amsterdam, 1987.

Gammage, Sonja. *Atticism in Achilles Tatius: An Examination of Linguistic Purism in Achilles Tatius' "Leucippe and Clitophon."* PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 2018.

Gaul, Niels. *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten in der Frühen Palaiologenzeit.* Wiesbaden, 2011.

Giannouli, Antonia, "Education and Literary Language in Byzantium," in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature,* edited by Martin Hinterberger, pp. 52–71. Turnhout, 2014.

Harding, Philip, "Demosthenes in the underworld. A chapter in the *Nachleben* of a *rhetor*," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and orator,* edited by Ian Worthington, pp. 246–71. London/New York, 2000.

Hunger, Herbert. *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, vol. 1, *Codices historici, codices philosophici et philologici.* Vienna, 1961.

Hunger, Herbert. "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Literature: The Importance of Rhetoric," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1979*, edited by Margaret Mullett, and Roger Scott, pp. 35–47. Birmingham, 1981.

Ljubarskij, Jakov, "How should a Byzantine text be read," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001,* edited by Elisabeth Jeffreys, pp. 117–25. Aldershot, 2003.

Lucarini, Carlo Martino. "Erodiano e l'Atticismo," in *Erodiano. Tra crisi e trasformazione*, edited by Alessandro Galimberti, pp. 3–37. Milan, 2017.

Mango, Cyril. *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror.* Oxford, 1975.

Miletti, Lorenzo. "Elio Aristide nella scuola tardoantica: commentari e trattati di retorica," *AION. Annali del Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico. Sezione di filologia e letteratura classica* 40 (2018), 58–85.

Milns, Robert David, "The Public Speeches of Demosthenes," in *Demosthenes. Statesman and orator,* edited by Ian Worthington Ian, pp. 205–23. London/New York, 2000.

Pernot, Laurent. *L'ombre du tigre. Recherches sur la réception de Démosthène.* Naples, 2006.

Robert, Fabrice. "Enquête sur la présence d'Aelius Aristide et de son œuvre dans la littérature grecque du IIᵉ au XVᵉ siècle de notre ère," *Anabases* [online] 10 (2009), 141–60.

Rollo, Antonio. "'Greco medievale' e 'greco bizantino'," *AION. Annali del Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico. Sezione linguistica* 30 (2008), 429–73.

Ševčenko, Ihor. *Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos. La vie intellectuelle et politique à Byzance sous les premiers Paléologues.* Brussels, 1962.

Ševčenko, Ihor. "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time," in *The Kariye Djami,* vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its*

Intellectual Background, edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 17–55. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Ševčenko, Ihor. "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose," in *XVI. Internationaler Byzantinisten Kongress, Wien 4.–9. Oktober 1981. Akten 1*, edited by Wolfram Hörandner, pp. 289–312. Vienna, 1981.

Ševčenko, Ihor. "Théodore Métochites, Chora et les courants intellectuels de l'époque," in *Ideology, Letters and Culture in the Byzantine World*, edited by Ihor Ševčenko, section VIII, pp. 15–39. London, 1982.

Trapp, Erich, "The role of vocabulary in Byzantine rhetoric as a stylistic device," in *Rhetoric in Byzantium. Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001,* edited by Elisabeth Jeffreys, pp. 137–49. Aldershot, 2003.

Valente, Stefano. "Old and New Lexica in Palaeologan Byzantium," in *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek*, edited by Andrea Massimo Cuomo, and Erich Trapp, pp. 45–55. Turnhout, 2017.

Vanderspoel, John. "Were the speeches of Aelius Aristides 'rediscovered' in the 350s p.C.?," in *Regards sur la Seconde sophistique et son époque*, edited by Thomas Schmidt, and Pascale Fleury, pp. 189–98. Toronto/Buffalo/London, 2011.

Vix, Jean-Luc. "Aelius Aristide, égal de Démosthène? Réflexions sur la réception d'Aristide à la Renaissance," *Dodone: Philologia* (*In memoriam Emmanuel Papathomopoulou*) 38–39 (2013), 433–52.

Wahlgren, Staffan, "Case, Style and Competence in Byzantine Greek," in *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature,* edited by Martin Hinterberger, pp. 170–75. Turnhout, 2014.

Xenophontos, Sophia. "The Byzantine Plutarch: Self-Identity and Model in Theodore Metochites' Essay 71 of the *Semeioseis Gnomikai,*" in *The Afterlife of Plutarch*, edited by John North, and Peter Mack, pp. 23–39. London, 2018.

Walking through the Narthex: the Rite in the Chora

Manuela Studer-Karlen

The two narthexes of the Chora were decorated with an extensive mosaic programme under the patronage of Theodore Metochites.[1] Following a detailed study of the three cycles depicted – namely, the story of the Theotokos, the Infancy of Christ, and his ministry – as well as of the patronal and iconic images, later publications went on to interpret various aspects of the programme.[2] And although attempts have been made to attribute a liturgical focus to the individual compositions, by and large they concerned the salvation-oriented and commemorative intentions of the patron.[3]

The complex mural decoration is so successfully integrated into the domes, vaults, apses, tympana, and pendentives that it is impossible to extricate the scenes from this variegated architecture. Recently, Markos Kermanidis has developed the hypothesis that a link between Metochites's philosophical and literary output and his artistic patronage is evident in the latter's

---

1 All the surfaces above the cornice were covered with mosaics. On the completion of the Chora before 1317 see: Kostis Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and His Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111. For Metochites: Ihor Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of His Time," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*, ed. Paul A. Underwood (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 17–91; Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (Istanbul/London, 2002), pp. 119–25; idem, *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons* (Nicosia, 2017); Markos Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik der Raummodellierung in Literatur und Kunst des Theodore Metochites* (Berlin, 2020); Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 69–111. Smyrlis was able to prove that Metochites became Megas Logothetes between 1313/14 and April 1317.

2 Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols (London/Princeton, N.J., 1966); and idem, ed., *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background* (Princeton, N.J., 1975). For later studies, see below.

3 Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul.* Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25 (Washington, D.C., 1987), pp. 63–76; idem, "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76, esp. 74–75; Robert S. Nelson, "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101, esp. 67; Rossitza Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance in the South Bay of the Chora Esonarthex," *Gesta* 48/1 (2009), 37–53; Maria Alessia Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle between Constantinople, Thessalonike, and Mistra," in *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, ed. Nicholas S.M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki, and Lorenzo M. Bondioli (Leiden, 2016), pp. 226–40, esp. 239–40.

Raummodellierung, in which a symmetrically ordered and linear space is skewed by lateral strains of thought, forming an intricate vision of intellectual and material reality.[4] There can be no doubt that the architecture of Metochites's additions to the Chora, like the iconography, reflected his personal priorities and values, and not just insofar as it provided a three-dimensional theatre for pictorial representation.[5] Indeed, he supplemented this via an enormous knowledge of liturgical, philosophical, and literary theories, as well as of propaganda strategies, such that decoding the multi-layered meaning of this decoration is challenging.

Furthermore, the political dimension must be considered. The refoundation of the Chora by Metochites was part of the project of the first Palaiologan emperors to return the capital to its former glory.[6] Most recently, Kostis Smyrlis pointed out that while Metochites, as a wealthy imperial official, was expected to participate in this effort because of his position and wealth, the Chora was also his opportunity to establish himself at the top of the hierarchy.[7] In addition to these socio-political components, the contemporary religious policy also played a significant role. The programme of the Chora results from one of the first major campaigns of church decoration in Constantinople after the 1284 restoration of Orthodoxy by Andronikos II Palaiologos (r. 1282–1328) in reaction to Union efforts at the Second Council of Lyon.[8] The pictures convey the traditional themes of Byzantine Orthodoxy, emphasizing the Orthodox liturgy.

But primarily, the church was constructed to host a wide array of rites, including the important sacrament of the Eucharist, the daily Liturgy of the

---

4   Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*.

5   Robert G. Ousterhout, "The Virgin of the Chora: An Image and its Contexts," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Leslie Brubaker, and idem (Urbana, Ill., 1995), pp. 91–109, esp. 92; Athanasios Semoglou, "L'éloquence au service de l'archéologie. Les 'enfants aimés' de Théodore Métochite et sa bibliothèque dans le monastère de Chora," *Series Byzantina. Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art* 8 (2010), 45–65; Paul Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and Constantinople," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], ed. Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2011), pp. 169–87; Nektarios Zarras, "Illness and Healing. The Ministry Cycle in the Chora Monastery and the Literary Oeuvre of Theodore Metochites," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 75 (2021), 85–119.

6   For the wider context: Alice-Mary Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), 243–61.

7   Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 84–93.

8   Robin Cormack, "… and the Word Was God: Art and Orthodoxy in Late Byzantium," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies*, ed. Andrew Louth, and Augustine Casiday (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 111–20, esp. 116–17. As Cormack argued, this is the case despite (or perhaps because) Theodore Metochites was the son of a pro-Unionist, George Metochites.

Hours, and the lesser services celebrated throughout the liturgical year.[9] The function of the architectural framework in the realization of rituals is a central topic of this paper, which reconstructs the movements of the liturgy performed in the space. Operating as a persistently multi-layered system, the architecture and decoration offered a flexible setting that resonated with the nuances of the liturgy and, indeed, with the individual intentions of the patron.[10]

The Organization and Intersections of the Structure

Within the architectural complexity of the Chora, the esonarthex stands out as idiosyncratic (Fig. 3.1).[11]

It is divided into four bays of varying sizes and with different types of vaulting, all arranged asymmetrically. The space rises into two domes of unequal size and shape, and the five doors are misaligned with one another.[12] The exonarthex originally formed a portico with arcaded openings along the west façade and a belfry over the south-west corner.[13] It consists of seven bays that differ from one another in size; six form the west façade of the building, while the seventh turns the corner onto the south side, where it meets the parekklesion. As the two-story northern annex was accessible from the bema through

---

9   Vasileios Marinis, "Defining Liturgical Space," in *The Byzantine Word*, ed. Paul Stephenson (London, 2010), pp. 284–302; idem, *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople. Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 11–12; idem, "Sacred Dimensions: Church Building and Ecclesiastical Practice," in *The Cambridge Companion to Constantinople,* ed. Sarah Bassett (Cambridge, 2022), pp. 180–99.

10   Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring," p. 63; idem, "The Virgin," pp. 92–93; idem, "Reading Difficult Buildings: The Lessons of the Kariye Camii," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden*, pp. 95–105, esp. 96–97, also for the interconnections between architecture and decoration. Whether perceptible, legible, intelligible, or not, the images, by the mere fact of their presence in the cultic space, can communicate the relationships they have with the architecture of the monument, its functions, and its symbolism: Maréva U, "Images et passages dans l'espace ecclésial à l'époque médiobyzantine," in *Visibilité et présence de l'image dans l'espace ecclésial*, ed. Sulamith Brodbeck, and Anne-Oange Poilpré (Paris, 2019), pp. 301–27.

11   The plan was made by Georgios Fousteris, whom I would like to thank most sincerely. The numbers in brackets in the main text or in the captions refer always to the exact location on the plan of the church.

12   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 65–70. For lighting purposes, the domes in the esonarthex were necessary to create space for windows.

13   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:19–21; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 70–78, 101–06; Lioba Theis, *Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau* (Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 11–12. The portico was a ubiquitous architectural feature throughout the ancient and medieval world. The belfry has been replaced by a minaret shortly before 1511.
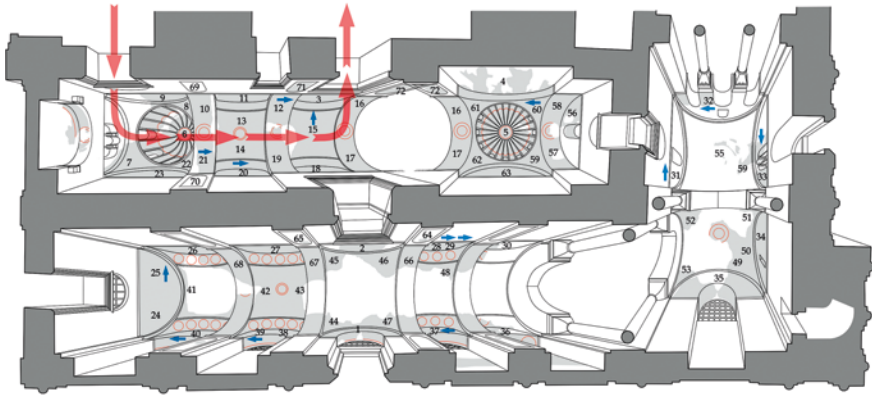
1: Virgin Blachernitissa
2: Christ Pantokrator (Fig. 3.5)
3: Christ and Theodore Metochites
4: Deesis, Christ Chalkites with Isaakios Komnenos
   and the nun Melania
5: Christ surrounded by 39 prophets
6: Virgin surrounded by 27 prophets
7: Joachim's offerings rejected
8: Joachim in the wilderness
9: Annunciation to St Anne
10: Meeting at the golden gate
11: Nativity of the Virgin
12: First seven steps of the Virgin
13: Virgin caressed by her parents
14: Virgin blessed by the priest
15: Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple
    (Fig. 3.3)
16: Virgin fed by an angel
17: Instruction of the Virgin
18: Skein of purple wool
19: Zacharias praying before the rods of the suitors
20: Betrothal of Mary and Joseph (Fig. 3.4)
21: Joseph taking the Virgin to his house
22: Annunciation to the Virgin at the well (Fig. 3.2)
23: Joseph taking leave, Joseph reproaching
24: Joseph dreaming (Fig. 3.6)
25: Journey to Bethlehem (Fig. 3.6)
26: Enrolment for taxation
27: Nativity of Christ
28: Journey of the Magi (Fig. 3.7)
29: Magi before Herod (Fig. 3.7)
30: Herod inquiring of the priests and scribes
31: Adoration of the Magi (lost)
32: Return of the Magi
33: Flight into Egypt
34: Herod ordering the Massacre of the Innocents
    and the Massacre of the Innocents
35: Massacre of the Innocents

36: Mourning mothers
37: Flight of Elizabeth and John
38: Joseph dreaming (Fig. 3.11)
39: Return of the Holy Family from Egypt (Fig. 3.11)
40: Journey to Jerusalem (Fig. 3.12)
41: Christ among the doctors
42: John the Forerunner bearing witness to Christ
43: Temptations of Christ
44: The slaying of the calf (Fig. 3.10)
45: Miracle at Cana (Fig. 3.8)
46: Multiplication of loaves (Fig. 3.9)
47: Multiplication of loaves: the twelve baskets
48: Christ healing a leper
49: Healing of the dropsical man
50: Healing of the paralytic at Capernaum
51: Healing of the man born blind (?)
52: Healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda
    and the paralytic healed
53: Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well
54: Christ calling Zacchaeus
55: Healing scene
56: Healing scene
57: Healing of the leper
58: Healing with the man with the withered hand
59: Healing of a blind and mute man
60: Healing of the woman with the issue of blood
61: Healing of Peter's mother-in-law
62: Healing of the two blind men
63: Healing of the multitudes
64: St Peter
65: St Paul
66: St Demetrios
67: St George
68: St Andronikos
69: St Anne with the infant Mary
70: St Joachim
71: Theotokos with the infant Christ (Hodegetria)
72: St John the Baptist

FIGURE 3.1 Plan of the narthexes with indications of the themes
            Red arrows: Great Entrance (clergy)
            DRAWING: GEORGIOS FOUSTERIS

the prothesis, the lower passage, equipped with a row of niches in the north wall, may have served as the storage place for liturgical furnishings (Fig. 1.2).[14] The unusual upper storey of the northern annex, only accessible from the stairway, was probably built, as Robert G. Ousterhout argued, to house the library of Metochites.[15] The narthexes served to connect these two lateral units – the parekklesion at the south of the church and the northern complex – in addition to fulfilling their traditional function as liminal spaces between the exterior of the building and the naos.

The overall appearance of the church is asymmetrical, creating a sense of movement and dynamism.[16] Since the south façade as well as the south portal, just beside the belfry, were decorated with great detail, Ousterhout suggested that the south portal was the main entrance intended for the congregation (Fig. 1.1).[17] Meanwhile, the northern door of the exonarthex was likely connected to a portico of light construction and, via this, to monastic buildings.[18] This entrance was thus devoted to the clergy as a convenient passage to the many services held in the church.

Like many sacred spaces, the Chora was animated by liturgical rituals, including internal liturgical processions; when liturgical processions between the individual spaces are retraced, the connections that emerge, along with

---

14   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 46, 50, 114, fig. 74; Theis, *Flankenräume,* p. 155.

15   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:23; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 114–16, fig. 80; Theis, *Flankenräume,* p. 155. This form is almost without parallel in Byzantine architecture. The lighting of the upper storey is perfect for a library. Metochites wanted his book kept in the library of the Chora; see Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 84. Architecturally, too, there are significant arguments in favour of this hypothesis: in its enclosure and remoteness, the space is difficult to access by unauthorized persons. The room also had a window-sized opening that directly faced the naos. This allowed both acoustic and visual participation in the liturgy.

16   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:20; Ousterhout, "Reading," p. 96.

17   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, fig. 127; idem, "Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 241–50, esp. 243, fig. 1. The belfry is decorated with the monogram of the founder. Nelson assumed that the south door – as it led to the gate and the city beyond, in contrast to the north door – must have been used more by the laity than the monks. Therefore, Metochites and his family were also among the audience. Other worshipers probably included the inhabitants of this quarter, which became a popular place of residence for the aristocracy. Robert S. Nelson, "Taxation with Representation. Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22/1 (1999), 56–82, esp. 69–70, 74. The palace of Metochites was situated near the Chora: Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 79. When we speak of congregation in this article, we mean the presumably heterogeneous group excluding the practicing clergy.

18   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 86–87; idem, "Contextualizing," p. 243, fig. 7; idem, *The Art*, p. 100; and in his introduction to this volume.

their implications for the conception of the visual programme, are of the utmost significance. It is important to point out that the northern and southern annexes are both intimately integrated into the katholikon – not just via the narthexes – and, additionally, that this integration takes an unusual form. The parekklesion connects with both narthexes and with the naos, but not with the sanctuary; at the same time, it intrudes upon the sanctuary by occupying the space of the former diakonikon.[19] The ground floor of the northern annex communicates both with the esonarthex and with the outside of the building, completely bypassing the main space of the katholikon. The door where the east wall of the northern bay of the esonarthex meets the west wall of the northern annex is, through its positioning, set into relation with both spaces, such that the north dome of the esonarthex is on the same axis as the exposed barrel vault of the annex. This web of connections, asymmetrical overall, can only be adequately understood in the context of the liturgical articulation of the entire interior of the church, and indeed this was the context in which the clergy and the congregation would have experienced the building.[20] For the processions, the dominant west-east axis, running from the portico to the apse on the line of the main entrance, offered a visual and formal prologue to the services performed inside the church.[21]

In the early Christian churches of Constantinople, narthexes were used for the preparation of liturgical 'entrances' into the naos. After the 10th century, however, the narthex found a multitude of uses.[22] It was certainly intended for commemorative services for the deceased as well as for burials, as the later tombs in the exonarthex of the Chora also attest.[23] In the Middle Byzantine

---

19   The access to the room south of the bema, the diakonikon, was blocked by the north wall, which is of Palaiologan construction. For the different functions of the diakonikon at the Chora in the 12th to 14th century: Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:23; Georges Descoeudres, *Die Pastophorien im syro-byzantinischen Osten: Eine Untersuchung zu architektur- und liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen* (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 155–56; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 49–51; Theis, *Flankenräume*, p. 155. See Athanasios Semoglou's contribution to this volume.

20   Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring," p. 63; idem, "Reading," pp. 96–97.

21   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 92; idem, "The Virgin," p. 100; Nelson, "The Chora," pp. 69–70.

22   Thomas Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople. Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, Pa., 1971), pp. 138–52; Georgi Gerov, "The Narthex as Desert: The Symbolism of the Entrance Space in Orthodox Church Buildings," in *Ritual and Art. Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, ed. Pamela Armstrong (London, 2006), pp. 144–59; Marinis, "Defining," pp. 294–95; idem, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 64–76.

23   The insertion of arcosolia in the arched openings gradually closed the once-open portico. Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 81–82; Sarah T. Brooks, "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat., ed. Holger A. Klein, and Robert G.

period, the narthex often served as a point of access to flanking chapels of a funerary or commemorative nature.[24] Generally speaking, the narthex was occupied during the Liturgy of the Hours, and the lesser services of monastic ritual were performed there rather than in the naos.[25] However, the climax of the Byzantine liturgy was the procession of the bread and wine to the altar, known as the Great Entrance, the course of which we have learned about particularly from typica.[26] We should note that no typikon associated with Metochites is known for the Chora.[27] Metochites authored a rich literary oeuvre, but it hardly deals in explicit terms with the liturgical processes in the church.[28] The architectural articulation and its interplay with the decorative

Ousterhout (New York, 2004), pp. 23–32, esp. 25–28; Emanuel Moutafov, *Богородица вместилище на невместимото: човешки измерения на Палеологовото изкуство в Константинопол* [Theotokos, Container of the Uncontainable: Human Dimensions of Palaiologan Art in Constantinople] (Sofia, 2020), pp. 90–140; Nicholas Melvani, "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40. On the commemorative function of the narthex: Slobodan Ćurčić, "The Twin-Domed Narthex in Paleologan Architecture," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 13 (1971), 333–44; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 96–100; Svetlana Tomeković, "Contribution à l'étude du programme du narthex des églises monastiques (XIe–première moitié du XIIIe s.)," *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 140–54; Florence Bache, "La fonction funéraire du narthex dans les églises byzantines du XIIe au XIVe siècle," *Histoire de l'art* 7 (1989), 25–33. The tombs confirm the continued use of the Chora by its patrons. The process of transforming the outer narthex into a funerary space began rather early. Tomb E should be dated towards the middle of the 14th century. Melvani, "The Last Century," pp. 1230–32. See also Michele Bacci's contribution to this volume.

24   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 98.

25   Marinis, "Defining," pp. 284–302; Warren T. Woodfin, "Wall, Veil, and Body: Textiles and Architecture in the Late Byzantine Church," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden*, pp. 371–85, esp. 374–75; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 11–12.

26   Catia Galatariotou, "Byzantine Ktetorika Typika: A Comparative Study," *Revue des études byzantines* 45 (1987), 77–138, esp. 89–107; Gail Nicholl, "A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050–1200*, ed. Margaret Mullet, and Anthony Kirby (Belfast, 1997), pp. 285–308; Svetlana Popović, "Are typica sources for architecture? The Case of the Monasteries of the Theotokos Evergetis, Chilandri and Studenica," in *Work and Worship*, pp. 266–84.

27   Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 170–71. There is no such document referenced in his writings. We do not know whether, upon taking over the monastery, Metochites adopted, adapted, or even replaced whatever document had been in use.

28   Ševčenko, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 19–55; Mary Cunningham, Michael Featherstone, and Sophia Georgiopoulou, "Theodore Metochites's Poem to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 100–16; Michael Featherstone, *Metochites's Poems 'to Himself': Introduction, Text and Translation* (Vienna, 2000); Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 169–87; Michael Featherstone, "Metochites's Poems and the Chora," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden*, pp. 215–39; Theodore Metochites, *On*

programme provide clues to the liturgical functioning of the site, with the programme offering a visual commentary on the rituals performed in the church.

The Processions

Despite the gradual decline of outdoor processions after the 7th century, the Byzantine rite still maintained its processional character. The most important element of the rite was the Divine Liturgy, distinguished by two processions known as 'entrances'.[29] The Little Entrance was the first movement from the narthex into the naos on the part of the officiating priest bearing the Gospel book. During the Great Entrance, the gifts were carried from the prothesis, where the loaf of bread and the chalice had been prepared at the beginning of the liturgy, to the narthex and then returned to the bema via the naos and the Royal Gate.[30] The Great Entrance was the climax of the liturgy and was assigned the most solemn ceremonial embellishment. The naos accommodated the standing congregants and befitted the processions of the clergy that began and ended in the sanctuary.[31]

Although Byzantine sources emphasize that the liturgy of the Great Entrance encompassed the entire life of Christ, its focus was the Passion and Resurrection.[32] This multi-sensory procession, symbolizing the Entry into

Morals or Concerning Education, trans. Sophia Xenophontos (Cambridge, Mass., 2020); Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 85–119; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 95–103. See also Didier Clerc's contribution to this volume.

29   Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 15–16; Marinis, "Sacred Dimensions," p. 191.

30   Mathews, *The Early Churches,* pp. 155–62; Robert F. Taft, *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome, 1978), pp. 178–215; Descoeudres, *Die Pastophorien,* pp. 130–48; Robert F. Taft, "In the Bridegroom's Absence. The Paschal Triduum in the Byzantine Church," in idem, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), pp. 87–91; Marinis, "Defining," pp. 285–86, 294; Marinis*, Architecture and Ritual,* pp. 22–23; Vasileios Marinis, "On earth as it is in heaven? Reinterpreting the Heavenly Liturgy in Byzantine art," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 255–68, esp. 259–60.

31   Mathews, *The Early Churches*, pp. 158–61; Marinis, "Defining," pp. 293–94; idem, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 22–23, 49.

32   In various commentaries on the Byzantine liturgy, authors interpret the procession as a mimesis of the Passion of Christ. René Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantines de la divine liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1966), p. 239; Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 35–40, 178, 244–48; Woodfin, "Wall, Veil, and Body," p. 378. In contrast to this, Nicolas Kabasilas is one of the rare commentators who insists on the purely practical nature of this transfer of

Jerusalem as well as the journey to Golgotha on Good Friday, was enriched by chants and smells (i.e. incense).[33] The *Cherubikos Hymnos* (Χερουβικὸς ὕμνος), sung during the Great Entrance of the gifts, praised the eternal kingdom of Christ.[34] This ceremony contained mystagogical elements and a psychological realism and favoured visuality and interaction.

As regards the liturgical disposition of the early churches in Constantinople, these two processions constituted entrances not only into the sanctuary but also into the church itself. In the Little Entrance, the clergy and congregation entered the church for the first time, before the former proceeded to the central doors of the sanctuary.[35] This means that, while the procession of the clergy would not become visible until it passed the north door of the exonarthex, its starting point was the prothesis, as the *diataxis* (διάταξις) of Philotheos Kokkinos (1300–79) clearly states.[36] In the case of the Chora, however, it can be assumed that the congregation gathered in the exonarthex and that, from there, the processions led along the main axis into the naos. The exonarthex was used for the preparation of the Little Entrance.[37]

---

gifts. See Steven Hawkes-Teeples, "The Prothesis of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy: What Has Been Done and What Remains," in *Rites and Rituals of the Christian East*, ed. Bert Groen, Daniel Galadza, Nina Glibetic, and Gabriel Radle (Leuven, 2014), pp. 317–27, esp. 319–22.

33 The important role of the liturgical movements within the church space can be seen in the detailed sketches of the monk Vasily Grigorovich-Barsky (1701–47) from Kiev, which were made much later; idem, *Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος 1725–1726, 1744–1745* [His journeys to Mount Athos 1725–1726, 1744–1745] (Thessaloniki, 2010). On the synaesthetic experience of the images during the rite: Liz James, "Senses and Sensibility in Byzantium," *Art History* 27 (2004), 522–37; Béatrice Caseau, "Experiencing the Sacred," in *Experiencing Byzantium*, ed. Claire Nesbitt, and Mark Jackson (Farnham, 2013), pp. 59–77.

34 Simeon of Thessaloniki, *De sacra liturgica*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–66), 155:340; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 22–23. The *Cherubikos Hymnos* was probably introduced in the 6th century under Justin II and has been intoned during the Great Entrance since the 12th century: Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 69, 119–48; idem, "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, esp. 54; idem, and Stefano Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso. Edizione italiana rivista, ampliata e aggiornata* (Grottaferrata, 2014), pp. 155–205.

35 Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 43, 192; idem, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," pp. 50–51; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 21–22.

36 Panayiots N. Trempelas, *Αι τρεις λειτουργίαι κατά τους εν Αθήναις κώδικας* [The three liturgies according to the codexes of Athens] (Athens, 1982), p. 6.

37 Mathews, *The Early Churches*, pp. 108, 125–49; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 68, 70–71.

Theodore Balsamon (*c.*1105–95) relays that the priest passed through the narthex during the Great Entrance.[38] This, too, was the case at the Chora, where the Great Entrance probably started in the prothesis chamber.[39] While no door connects the prothesis to the outside or to the naos, there is one leading to the bema and a second one to the northern annex (Fig.1.2). It is therefore likely that the procession moved through the vaulted lower annex – which may also have assumed some functions of the diakonikon – towards the dome of the esonarthex. As soon as the procession came to stand under the north dome of the esonarthex, it turned southwards and followed the same steps as the depicted Holy Family (Fig. 3.1). Also beneath the north dome of the esonarthex commenced the cycle of the Virgin.[40] We can assume that the procession then led through the central door of the esonarthex to the naos and the bema, placing an emphasis on the west-east axis. The beginning of the Great Entrance being invisible to them, the congregation experienced its reappearance in the naos as a sudden epiphany, as a real entry of the gifts into the building's consecrated space.[41]

Around 1380 Demetrios Gemistos described the Great Entrance in his guidebook for the service of the Divine Liturgy based on the influential and detailed work of Philotheos Kokkinos.[42] Gemistos relayed that the whole procession took place within the building – as was true also at the Chora.[43] Unlike earlier *diataxeis*, in this one Philotheos inserted the rubrics into the text of the liturgy itself, in the proper places between the prayers, thus bringing

---

38   Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 199–200. It is his commentary on canon 2: Theodore Balsamon, *In epist. S. Dionysii Alexandrini ad Basilidem episcopum*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–66), 138:465–68.

39   Mathews, *The Early Churches,* pp. 105–16.

40   Nelson, "The Chora," p. 70.

41   I am grateful to Paul Magdalino for sharing this idea with me.

42   *Philotheus cpolitanus Patriarcha, Ordo sacri ministrii*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–66), 154:745–66. Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. XXXVI–XXXVII, 200–03; idem, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (New York, 1992), pp. 191, 257–75; idem, "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite," in *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond*, pp. 179–94, esp. 191–94; Alexander Rentel, "The Origins of the 14th-Century Patriarchal Liturgical Diataxis of Dimitrios Gemistos," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 71 (2005), 363–85. Philotheus Kokkinos recorded the *diataxis* as Higoumenos of the monastery of the Great Lavra on Mount Athos between spring 1342 and June 1345. After he became patriarch of Constantinople in 1354, his work gained prestige and propagandistic force.

43   In contrast to the pre-iconoclastic period when outdoor processions preceded the main liturgical celebration. Mathews, *The Early Churches,* pp. 155–61; Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 186–87, 192–94.

the development of the liturgical formulae into their present form.[44] Likely established in the context of the Great Entrance already in the first half of the 14th century, these formulae help elucidate the individual outcome at the Chora and specifically the interplays between the oeuvre of Metochites and the visual programme. When applied to the Chora, these individual rubrics inserted into the liturgy are important for understanding the unique intersections among the decoration, the architectural disposition, and the processional ritual.

Metochites evidently planned the building with this routing of the entrance processions in mind. This may have included practical considerations, such as the need to gather – along the path of the procession – precious objects or vestments, which may have been kept in the northern annex, given the absence of a diakonikon and the small confines of the prothesis. But he likely also intended to achieve a theatrical effect, to restore dramatic meaning to the concept of 'entrance' (εἴσοδος). There were undoubtedly further layers of ritual and symbolic intention behind what was the most obvious result of the arrangement: the enhancement of the value and visibility of the narthex and portico as liminal and transitional spaces. Indeed, the narrative cycles of the mosaics that cover their vaults and the pendentives of their domes suggest a processional use for both these spaces. The exonarthex takes the worshiper through the life of Christ in a sequence that begins not at the west door but at the north one. At the southern end of the exonarthex, the sequence proceeds under the former bell tower in the direction of the parekklesion. However, instead of continuing into the parekklesion, it turns again, ending in the pendentives and west tympanum of the south dome of the esonarthex. Here, the narrative cycle of Christ's life and ministry meets that of the life of the Virgin, which begins under the north dome, near the doorway leading to the northern annex. Thus, the iconography of both esonarthex and exonarthex emphasized their respective functions as north-south passages whose orientation made no concessions to the west-east axis of the church.

The Interplay of the Monastic Ritual and the Eucharistic Liturgy: the Great Entrance

The architectural framework and the mosaic decoration were conceived with an eye towards monastic and other rituals desired by the patron. However, there is no reason to think that Metochites would have privileged monastic

---

44   Taft, "Mount Athos," pp. 191–94.

ritual over the Eucharistic liturgy. That he wanted the Chora to have a place in public worship is clear in the mosaic programme's multiple allusions to images in other Constantinopolitan churches: thus, he intentionally evoked in the Chora the mosaics of Hagia Sophia, making conscious reference especially to those with imperial associations.[45] The aim of such allusions was to enhance his own status and to stress his imperial connections.

What is certain, however, is that the very distinctive plan that Metochites imposed with his additions to the Chora had a liturgical dimension and intention. The space between the north entry to the esonarthex (via the west door of the northern annex) and the vault over the main axis of the church is occupied by the cycle of the life of the Virgin.[46] It begins in the north-west corner of the pendentive vault with the scene of the rejection of Joachim's offerings (7)[47] and proceeds around the esonarthex, including the central bay in front of the doorway to the naos. It ends with the Annunciation to the Virgin at the well (22; Fig. 3.2) and Joseph's reproach of the Virgin (23), which appear at the north end of the west wall.[48]

It is well known that the main source for the cycle of Mary's life is the Protoevangelium of James.[49] In the middle of the 6th century, liturgical writers began to draw inspiration from this text.[50] It was precisely in this period that various Marian feasts came to be instituted, celebrating events in the life of the

---

45   Nelson, "The Chora," pp. 67–101; Nancy P. Ševčenko, "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et donateurs dans le monde byzantin*, ed. Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota (Paris, 2012), pp. 189–205, esp. 193–94; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 111–12. There is also a section devoted to the Great Church in Metochites's 11th poem, dating from the mid-1320s. Michael Featherstone, "Theodore Metochites's Eleventh Poem," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 81 (1988), 253–64.

46   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:60–85; Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," in *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami*, pp. 163–94; Ousterhout, *The Art*, pp. 35–47; Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*, pp. 319–21.

47   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami,* 1:60–61, pl. 86–87.

48   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami,* 1:82–85, pl. 146–51. Karahan's interpretation of the Annunciation as an example of the interaction of spiritual and bodily strength is too hypothetical: Anne Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images and the Issue of Transcendence and Immanence. The Theological Background of the Late Byzantine Palaiologan Iconography and Aesthetics of the Chora Church, Istanbul* (Stockholm, 2005), pp. 89–93.

49   Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 163–64.

50   Mary Cunningham, "The Use of the Protoevangelion of James in the 8th-century Homilies on the Mother of God," in *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Text and Images*, ed. Leslie Brubaker, and Mary Cunningham (Ashgate, 2011), pp. 163–78, esp. 166; Cornelia Horn, "The Protoevangelium of James and its Reception in the Caucasus," *Scrinium* 4 (2018), 223–38, esp. 225–26. This begins with Romanos the Melode, who employs the apocryphal text as a narrative source in his *kontakion*.

FIGURE 3.2   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, esonarthex: *Annunciation to the Virgin at the Well*

Virgin and her role in the conception and birth of Christ.[51] Consequently, by the early 8th century at the latest, the Protoevangelium achieved full acceptance in the Byzantine liturgical and theological traditions, serving as an important resource for liturgical hymns and sermons.[52] At the Chora, the locations

---

51   Joseph Ledit, *Marie dans la liturgie de Byzance* (Paris, 1976), pp. 102–03, 109, 113, 118–19, 121, 129; Averil Cameron, "The Early Cult of the Virgin," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art,* ed. Maria Vassilaki (Milan, 2000), pp. 10–17; Cunningham, "The Use," pp. 166–67.

52   Horn, "The Protoevangelium," p. 225. The Protoevangelium enjoyed a hybrid status, at once apocryphal and quasi-canonical. It should be stressed that the *Akathistos Hymnos* played a major role in shaping the feasts in connection with the Virgin's protective role in Constantinople. On the influence of this hymn on the images in the Chora: Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, "L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne akathiste et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'enfance de la Kariye Djami," *Byzantion* 54/2 (1984), 648–702; Henry Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality in the Art of the Kariye Camii," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden*, pp. 57–69, esp. 63.

of such images visualizing the Marian feasts speak to their liturgical function: their prominent placements, as well as their inscriptions, refer to the liturgy, inspired by the Protoevangelium and based upon the cult of the Theotokos and her role in the salvation of mankind. It is crucial to note that the liturgical hymns and sermons rhetorically amplified the text.[53] For example, an association of the Virgin with paradisiacal imagery occurs in a remarkable piece written by the court official Theodore Hyrtakenos (active *c.*1282–1328).[54] He is the author of an ekphrasis describing the garden of St Anne as a fertile space in which the Virgin's mother was told by an angel that she would conceive the Virgin. This text finds a visual corollary in the mosaic of the Annunciation to St Anne (9) at the Chora, which features a portrayal of the garden.[55] That the mosaic is an intentional rendering of the description is further suggested by the fact that Hyrtakenos was a correspondent of Metochites.[56] Henry Maguire cites other contemporary customs that served to stress the special status of the Virgin.[57] This 'rhetorical realism', as Maguire puts it, underscored the Virgin's essential role in the Incarnation – the antithesis to the Passion of Christ – and this formed the main liturgical theme. The Eucharist is above all a commemoration of the Passion and death of Christ, which were made possible by the Incarnation. The Passion was evoked in the Great Entrance, which was performed in this part of the narthex. Thus, the emphasis on the Incarnation in this region of the decorative programme might bespeak Metochites's thoughtful planning.

The first part of the cycle is rendered in extreme detail, such as the episode of Joachim, treated in two separate compositions (7, 8).[58] The level of detail can

---

53   Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," pp. 57–69. These hymns and sermons – once incorporated into the liturgies – acquired a canonical status, which Maguire calls 'rhetorical realism'.

54   Mary-Lyon Dolezal, and Maria Mavroudi, "Theodore Hyrtakenos' Description of the Garden of St. Anna and the Ekphrasis of Gardens," in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. Antony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C., 2002), pp. 105–58, esp. 144–47; Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," pp. 63–64.

55   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:64–65, pl. 92–95; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 171–72; Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," pp. 63–64, fig. 8.

56   Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," p. 63; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 108–10.

57   Henry Maguire, "*Abaton* and *Oikonomia*: St. Neophytos and the Iconography of the Presentation of the Virgin," in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki,* ed. Nancy P. Ševčenko, and Christopher Frederick Moss (Princeton, N.J., 1999), pp. 95–105. The image shows the Virgin passing through the door that only she could pass through, as described in a sermon of St Neophytos the Recluse.

58   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:60–61, pl. 86–89; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 169–71.

FIGURE 3.3   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, esonarthex: *Presentation of Mary in the Temple*
PHOTO: NEKTARIOS ZARRAS

be explained by the fact that the scenes represent Marian feasts – namely, the Nativity of the Virgin (11) and the Presentation in the Temple (15; Fig. 3.3) – that played a liturgical role of the utmost importance and, therefore, demanded a prominent location in the church.[59]

The large composition of the Nativity[60] occupies the entire eastern lunette of the second bay, while the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple extends

---

59   Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 174–87; Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images*, pp. 189–92.

60   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:66–68, pl. 98–103.

around the domical vault of the third bay in a composition made possible by increasing the number of attendant maidens from the usual seven to nine, disposed in a graceful ring around the vault.[61] Although it remains part of the larger narrative cycle, its primary compositional device, that the Temple is centred directly over the door leading to the actual sanctuary, as well as its adjacent episodes, such as Mary being fed by an angel (16), evoke the significance of the Eucharistic experience that took place in the naos.[62] The depiction of the Virgin's first steps (12) directly to the north on the vault points towards the Temple, while the composition of the vault points east. Figures move towards the Temple and thereby replicate the believers' path to the naos (Fig.3.3).[63] Just as the Virgin is brought to the Temple in the depiction directly above the door, so beneath this image, the gifts are carried to the entrance of the church's sanctuary.[64] Furthermore, a stop was made here during the procession in order to reciprocate supplications and to explicitly commemorate the founders (*ktetors*); the image thus closely correlates with the performance.[65] This halt was accompanied by recitations of various texts and prayers, each of which articulated a connection to the Old Testament, with an emphasis on the fulfilment of the prophecies in the history of salvation by means of the Incarnation and Passion.[66] In the Chora, this point is visualized particularly by the juxtaposition of the Virgin holding the Christ Child in the summit of the dome to the

61   Ibid., 1:72–74, pl. 119–25; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 179–80.

62   Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," p. 179; Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 99–100; Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," p. 67. The Presentation is flanked by the trilogy of Mary's life in the Temple: The Virgin fed by an angel (16), Mary's instruction in the temple (17) and the skein of purple wool (18). Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:74–78, pl. 128–37.

63   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:68–69, pl. 104–05; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," p. 177; Nelson, "The Chora," pp. 68–69; Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images,* pp. 147–48.

64   Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 99–100; Nelson, "The Chora," p. 68; Maria Evangelatou, "Krater of Nectar and Altar of the Bread of Life: The Theotokos as Provider of the Eucharist in Byzantine Culture," in *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium: Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, ed. Thomas Arentzen, and Mary Cunningham (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 77–119, esp. 92; Jasmina S. Ćirić, "Theodore Metochites Mosaic at Chora and the Relics of the True Cross," *Journal of Mosaic Research* 14 (2021), 41–51, esp. 46–49. The procession depicted above comments upon and reinforces the real procession below.

65   Dimitris I. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz. Der Ritus – das Bild* (Munich, 1965), p. 40; Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," p. 50; Hans Belting, *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter. Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion* (Berlin, 1981), pp. 195–96; Stefanos Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. A Comparative Analysis of its Origins, Evolution, and Structural Components* (Leuven, 2009), pp. 232–35.

66   Ousterhout, "The Virgin," p. 101; Manuela Studer-Karlen, "Les typologies mariales dans l'art paléologue," *Byzantina* 36 (2019), 103–66.

surrounding prophets, an adjacency that of course also points to Mary's royal descent (6).[67]

Starting in the 13th century, the image of the Virgin holding the Christ Child surrounded by prophets came to be frequently used in wall and vault paintings, especially in the drum of the secondary domes where prophets are sometimes accompanied by typological attributes.[68] The attributes have a precise function in the course of the prayers, just as they had a precise function in the course of the action of the Old Testament.[69]

The second part of the cycle, depicted on the west wall, also has many detailed episodes that constitute a small cycle in themselves, such as the wedding.[70] From all this, it can be concluded that the intention of the programme of this area of the esonarthex was twofold: to offer a counterpart to the Passion-focussed Great Entrance with a totality of Mariological subjects

---

67   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami,* 1:28–29, 35–37, 49–59, pl. 67, 71–84; idem, "Some Problems in Programs and Iconography of Ministry Cycles," in *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami*, pp. 245–302, esp. 268.

68   Doula Mouriki, "Αἱ βιβλικαί προεικονίσεις τῆς Παναγίας εἰς τόν τροῦλλον τῆς Περιβλέπτου τοῦ Μυστρά," [The biblical depictions of the Virgin Mary in the Church of the Peribleptos in Mistra] *ΑΔ Μελέται* [Studies] 25 (1970), 217–51, esp. 267–70; Titos Papamastorakis, *Ὁ διάκοσμος τοῦ τρούλου τῶν ναῶν τῆς Παλαιολόγειας περόδου στὴ Βαλκανικὴ χερσόνησο καὶ τὴν Κύπρο* [The decoration of the dome of the churches of the Palaiologan period in the Balkan Peninsula and Cyprus] (Athens, 2001), pp. 98–109, 166–248. Mouriki hypothesized that the composition was intended to decorate the secondary domes, the privileged place of the Virgin in correlation to the central dome, traditionally reserved for the image of Christ Pantokrator. In the Chora, this second composition occupies the south dome of the esonarthex (5). This larger dome has 24 flutes, and the northern one 16. The genealogy of Christ encompasses both domes and can be broken into four subdivisions within the genealogy. Among the figures in the genealogy, some bear iconographic attributes symbolizing the metaphors of the Virgin. Studer-Karlen, "Les typologies," pp. 117–24. In the north dome at the Chora, Moses bears the *stamnos* on which the medallion of the Virgin is represented: Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, pl. 81–82. The typological image is a prototype of the Holy Eucharist. Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 101–02; Ousterhout, *The Art*, p. 107.

69   The 18th-century manual of the painter of Mount Athos, the Hermeneia, recommends decorating one of the cupolas of the narthex with the medallion of the Virgin and Child, carried by angels and surrounded by the prophets, and placing on the pendentives the hymnographers with appropriate words on their books or scrolls. Paul Hetherington, *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fourna: An English Translation with Commentary, of cod. gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library Leningrad*, 3rd ed. (London, 1981), p. 51.

70   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:78–82, pl. 135–45; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 184–88. Zacharias praying before the rods of the suitors (19); the Virgin entrusted to Joseph (20; Fig. 3.4); Joseph taking the Virgin in his house (21); Joseph taking leave of the Virgin (23).

FIGURE 3.4   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, esonarthex: *The Betrothal of Mary and Joseph*
PHOTO: NEKTARIOS ZARRAS

and, in addition, to assign the two main Marian feasts – the Nativity of the Virgin (11) and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (15, Fig. 3.3) – the most prominent placements. As the fourth bay was not used for the Great Entrance, this cycle within the esonarthex corresponds to the route of the procession (Fig. 3.1).[71]

Aside from these ritual inflections, further eloquent analogies are evident among the compositions. Thus, the Annunciation to Mary (22; Fig. 3.2) is set opposite the Annunciation to St Anne (9), and vis-à-vis the Nativity scene (11) appears the betrothal of Mary and Joseph (20; Fig. 3.4).[72]

In the latter, the stature of Joseph – as a tall adult man – contrasts with that of the diminutive girl. Ousterhout interprets this disparity as an allusion to Andronikos II's successful negotiation of the scandalous marriage of his

---

71   Nelson, "Taxation," p. 67. Nelson described it as a self-contained cycle starting and ending far from any processional path. The self-contained nature of the cycle corresponds to the exclusivity of the Great Entrance, which is undertaken only by the clergy and which mimics the Passion that commences in the Incarnation depicted here.

72   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:79–80, pl. 138–42; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," pp. 185–86, pl. 138.

very young daughter, Simonis Palaiologina, to the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin.[73]

The six saints depicted in the panels of the first, second, and third bays recall the theme of Incarnation and articulate the significance of this space. Thus, facing one another across the narthex, on the pilasters between the first and second bays, are St Anne with the infant Mary (69) and her husband Joachim (70). Between the second and third are Mary and the infant Christ (71) and probably her husband Joseph, although the latter is destroyed. On the eastern pilaster between the third and fourth bays, a small fragment remains of an image of St John the Baptist (72).[74]

Commemoration of the Living and the Dead

Of relevance to the Great Entrance in the narthex is the fact that the *Cherubikos Hymnos* was rhythmically interrupted – as documented in the manuscripts – by liturgical commemorations for the living and the deceased.[75] These interjections multiplied over time.[76] Ultimately, praying for the ruler, the bishop, and the benefactors, even if they were not participants in the liturgy, became a stable element of the rite.[77]

---

73 Ousterhout, *The Art*, p. 122; Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, p. 47. This marital diplomacy was a great triumph for Metochites.

74 Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:33, 160–61, pl. 314–17. The pendant of St John, which is destroyed, would have been his father, the prophet Zacharias, or his mother Elizabeth. On each of the pilasters that receive the transverse arches, a mosaic panel, semi-circular at the top and framed with marble, was set into the revetments of marble of the walls.

75 Concerning the *Cherubikos Hymnos* in the Great Entrance: Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 69, 78–79, 119–48, 227–34; Belting, *Das Bild*, pp. 195–96; Alexopoulos, *The Presanctified Liturgy*, pp. 232–35; Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon. Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 124–26; Richard Barrett, "Let Us Put Away All Earthly Care: Mysticism and the Cherubikon of the Byzantine Rite," *Studia patristica* 64 (2013), 111–24; Taft, and Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso*, pp. 155–205, 396; Marka Tomić Đjurić, "To Picture and to Perform: The Image of the Eucharistic Liturgy at Markov Manastir (I)," *Zograf* 38 (2014), 123–42, esp. 130–37.

76 References to the custom of commemoration are evident in the numerous inscriptions on the *epitaphioi* carried in the Great Entrance, which plead for the salvation of the donor and are to be understood as liturgical intercessory formulae. Yuliana Boycheva, "L'aer dans la liturgie orthodoxe et son iconographie du XIIIᵉ siècle jusque dans l'art post-byzantin," *Cahiers archéologiques* 51 (2003), 169–94, esp. 169–72; Yuliana Boycheva, "Functions and Iconography of the Aer-Epitaphios: Byzantine Aeres-Epitaphioi of the 14th–15th century preserved in Bulgaria," in *Medieval Bulgarian Art and Letters in a Byzantine Context,* ed. Elka Bakalova, Margaret Dimitrova, and M.A. Johnson (Sofia, 2017), pp. 192–222.

77 Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 119–34; Taft, and Parenti, *Il Grande Ingresso,* pp. 227–34.

The unusual features of the south bay of the esonarthex suggest that it, too, had a special function.[78] As noted above, it does not participate in the Mariological cycle, as the route of the Great Entrance proceeded southwards through the esonarthex and turned east into the naos, thus never reaching the south bay. This bay was nevertheless assigned prominence through its architectural and decorative articulation. Its major characteristic is the monumental mosaic of the Deesis, depicting Christ Chalkites alongside Isaakios Komnenos (*c.*1093–1152) and the nun Melania (4).[79] It appears that Metochites set aside the south bay of the esonarthex as a founders' chapel, for the purposes of commemoration.[80] The visual prayer represented in the Deesis would have testified that the historic *ktetors* of the Chora were remembered in the liturgies, and especially in the *Cherubikos Hymnos*, during which the procession of the Great Entrance stopped beneath the central vault of the esonarthex.[81] In this liturgical and visual context, the most prominent image is the portrait of Metochites in proskynesis before Christ, directly over the central door of the esonarthex (3).[82] Here, Theodore had himself depicted as at once a kneeling supplicant and a donor, a conjunction that is unique. The spatial disposition of the two panels of the Deesis alongside the former founders and the new patron kneeling before Christ makes evident that these should be read together,[83] and

78   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 98–110, fig. 113; Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," p. 40; Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, pp. 39–42.

79   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:45–48, pl. 36–41. For Christ Chalkites, the imperial icon par excellence: Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," pp. 41–45.

80   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 100; Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The Place of the Nun Melania (the Lady of the Mongols) in the Deesis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople," *Cahiers archéologiques* 43 (1995), 163–80; Ousterhout, "Contextualizing," p. 246; Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," pp. 37–53; Ousterhout, "Reading," p. 99; idem, *Finding a Place in History*, pp. 21–29, 34–41, 49–55; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 90. The mosaics convey the concern of Metochites with the past and with his own position in history. The nun Melania, or Maria Palaiologina, is known to have offered a Gospel book to the monastery: Georgi Krustev, "A Poem of Maria Comnene Palaeologina from Manuscript No. 177 of the Ivan Dujčev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies," *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 71–77, esp. 73–75; Teteriatnikov, "The Place," pp. 178–79.

81   Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 216–19.

82   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:42–43, pl. 26–29; Ousterhout, *The Art*, pp. 23–29; Ševčenko, "The Portrait," pp. 189–205; Ćirić, "Theodore Metochites Mosaic at Chora," pp. 41–51. For the inscriptions: Nektarios Zarras, "Remarks on Donor and Other Narrative Inscriptions of the Chora Monastery," in *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul*, ed. Ida Toth, and Andreas Rhoby (Oxford/Vienna, 2020), pp. 175–88, esp. 175–77; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 108.

83   Ousterhout, "Reading," p. 100.

meanwhile all the depicted protagonists are mentioned in the prayers of the *Cherubikos Hymnos.*

An image of the Virgin Blachernitissa (1) is depicted on the opposite wall, framing the view out the western door, i.e. looking towards the city walls.[84] The inscription identifies the Mother of God as the dwelling place or container for the Uncontainable, an epithet linked to the name of the Chora and derived from the *Akathistos Hymnos*.[85] The prominent location and the inscription refer to the fact that Chora Monastery was dedicated not only to Christ but also to the Virgin.[86] The visual model for the rendering of the Blachernitissa in the church was one of the most potent and miraculous icons worshiped in Constantinople. The icon evoked the protective function of the Virgin for the city and was kept at the imperial church of Blachernai.[87] At the Chora, the location of the Virgin Blachernitissa in the exonarthex corresponds to a monastic gate to the west of the church, indicating the direction to the Palace of Blachernai, with which the Chora had a well-documented connection.[88] The church's location near the city walls was no doubt also meant as a (symbolic) contribution to the defence of Constantinople.[89]

The Two Paths of the Little Entrance in the Exonarthex

The image of Christ (2) that appears in the lunette above the central door of the exonarthex – leading to the esonarthex on the main west-east axis – is certainly a key part of the ensemble (Fig. 3.5).

The inscriptions proclaim Christ as the Dwelling Place of the Living, while the juxtaposition of the image with the architecture implies his status as the

---

84   On the various functions of the images over passages: U, "Images et passages," 302–27.

85   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:40–41, pl. 20–25; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 66; Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 92–93. See for another interpretation: Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik,* pp. 326–27.

86   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:27–28; Ousterhout, "The Virgin," p. 93; Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The Dedication of the Chora Monastery in the Time of Andronikos II Palaiologos," *Byzantion* 66/1 (1996), 188–207; Ousterhout, *The Art*, pp. 103–04.

87   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:27; Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 94–98; idem, "Reading," pp. 99–100. Theodore Metochites refers often in his poems to the theme of the Virgin as a refuge.

88   Ousterhout, "The Virgin," pp. 91–109; idem, "Contextualizing," p. 244, fig. 7; idem, "Reading," p. 100.

89   Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 86–87.

FIGURE 3.5   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *Christ Pantokrator*
PHOTO: ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT

door by which the faithful enter into life.[90] As mentioned above, the clergy and congregation entered the church for the first time during the Little Entrance, the true introit of the Mass.[91] The exonarthex formed an open portico and may also have had liturgical functions.[92] As the main entrance for the congregation was at the south, the exonarthex also served as a gathering space from which the participants began the Little Entrance into the church. Two pieces of evidence suggest that the clergy entered the exonarthex through its north door: firstly, the fact that the narration in this area begins simultaneously with

90   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:45–48, pl. 36–41; Nelson, "Taxation," p. 72; Woodfin, "Wall, Veil, and Body," pp. 375–76; Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, p. 15. This is a reference to Psalm 116:9, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living," a verse that appears in the funeral liturgy.

91   Mathews, *The Early Churches*, pp. 138–54; Taft, *The Great Entrance*, p. 428; idem, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," pp. 50–51.

92   Mathews, *The Early Churches*, pp. 108, 125–49; Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 101–06; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 68, 70–71.

Christ's infancy and ministry,[93] and secondly, the possibility that the north façade was once an interior wall connected to monastic buildings.[94] If the latter is true, the door would have provided the clergy with a convenient, covered passage to the many services that took place daily and nightly at the church, as well as to the starting point for the Little Entrance.[95] The entranceway for the clergy thus differed from that of the congregation, and this had consequences for the mosaic decoration.[96]

The cycle of the Infancy of Christ, likewise, inspired by the apocryphal narrative, appears in the 14 lunettes on the walls of the exonarthex.[97] It begins in the one directly above the north door, through which the clergy entered, with Joseph dreaming (24) on the western half and the Journey to Bethlehem (25) on the eastern half (Fig. 3.6).[98]

The depicted movement of the Holy Family towards the east as well as the long accompanying quotation from Luke 2:4 anticipate the departure of the procession. The cycle proceeds on the eastern wall, turns the corner to fill the north and east lunettes in the last bay of the exonarthex, continues in the two south lunettes, and returns along the western wall of the exonarthex. This means that the clergy coming from the north did not enter the esonarthex through the central door. Moreover, the two depicted movements from the north towards the south – namely, the Magis' journey (28) and meeting with Herod (29), which converge on the fourth lunette of the east wall (Fig. 3.7) – once again parallel the processions of the clergy further to the south, where they turn to the east.[99]

The same principle of mirroring applies to the three episodes in the last bay near the parakklesion. The depictions of the Adoration of the Magi on the west part of the north wall (31; today lost) and the return of the Magi (32) anticipate

---

93   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 5, 77–78; Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 67, 70, 74. Entry from the north door allows a view of both cycles, sequentially.

94   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, pp. 86–87; idem, "Contextualizing," p. 243, fig. 7; idem, *The Art*, p. 100.

95   However, the Little Entrance begins earlier in the prothesis, as stated by Philotheos Kokkinos (Trempelas, *Αι τρεις λειτουργίαι*, p. 6). The clergy nevertheless enters the church for the first time through this door.

96   The two passages are also outlined by Nelson, "Taxation," p. 74.

97   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:29, 86–107, pl. 152–210; Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Infancy of Christ," in *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami*, pp. 197–241; Ousterhout, *The Art*, pp. 48–57.

98   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:86–88, pl. 152–58; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 202–06; Nelson, "Taxation," p. 69. The procession of the family is a symbol of the actual procession below.

99   Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 72–73, 77–78.

FIGURE 3.6　Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *Joseph Dreaming* and
　　　　　　　The Journey to Bethlehem
　　　　　　　PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK
　　　　　　　RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD
　　　　　　　UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

the processional route and point to the door on the north wall leading into
the south bay of the esonarthex.[100] As the depiction of the Adoration would
have been composed with Mary and the Christ Child to the east of the Magi,
the direction of the Adoration characterized the door as an entrance for the
procession of the clergy, coming from the west.[101]

　　The congregation took another path. Entering the south door, the worshi-
pers turned west and followed the tragic and detailed depiction of the Massacre
of the Innocents (34, 35). This drama represents the violence of the contem-
porary moment and would thus have had an important significance for the
viewers, conveying something of their experience of real life.[102] The sequence

---

100　Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:95; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 220–23;
　　　Nelson, "Taxation," p. 74; idem, "The Chora," pp. 77; Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*,
　　　pp. 321–22.

101　For the reconstruction of the scene of the Adoration: Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*,
　　　pl. 180a.

102　Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 229–35; Nelson, "The Chora," pp. 74–75;
　　　idem, "Heavenly Allies at the Chora," *Gesta* 43/1 (2004), 31–40, esp. 34; Karahan, *Byzantine*

is spread over three lunettes in two successive bays of the south-west corner and in the fifth bay of the exonarthex, and a fourth lunette shows Elizabeth (37) fleeing the massacre.[103] The dramatic and highly emotional representation of mourning mothers in the fifth bay (36) elicited empathy. Maguire specifies that the structure of the narrative derives not from visual models but from ancient rhetorical theory and, more specifically, the 5th-century sermon of Basil of Seleucia that was read on the day commemorating the Massacre of the Innocents.[104] The congregation took the same direction as Elizabeth to the central bay of the exonarthex.

On the east wall of this bay, the central panel with Christ Pantokrator (2; Fig. 3.5) is flanked, to the north, by the Nativity (27) and the scene of the enrolment for taxation (26) and, to the south, by the Journey of the Magi (28; Fig. 3.7) with the two episodes with Herod (29, 30).[105] The monumental arrangement implies a visual hierarchy with eschatological connotations, the position to Christ's right being superior to the left.[106] This would have been the first impression for a beholder entering the church through the south door, with an experience of empathy provoked by the contemplation of the Massacre of the Innocents, while standing before the image of Christ. This must have been the route for the congregation.

Holy Images, pp. 159–62; Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," p. 66. As Nelson showed, the period at the beginning of the 14th century was characterized by catastrophic ravages by the rebellious Catalans and Turks, which created great suffering. For the historical context: Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 132–242; David Jacoby, "The Catalan Company in the East: The Evolution of an Itinerant Army (1303–1311)," in *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach*, ed. Gregory I. Halfond (Farnham, 2015), pp. 153–82.

103   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:98–104, pl. 184–99; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 224–29. Such an extensive depiction of the Massacre of the Innocents was unprecedented in Byzantine art.

104   Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), pp. 30–33; Maguire, "Rhetoric and Reality," pp. 66–67. See also Semoglou, "L'éloquence au service de l'archéologie," pp. 45–65.

105   Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 206–24. The five episodes of the Magi (28–29, 31–33) form an exceptional ensemble and are inspired by the *Akathistos Hymnos*. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:92–97, pl. 173–81; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne akathiste," 648–702; Nelson, "Taxation," p. 67.

106   Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 72, 77; idem, "Heavenly Allies," pp. 33–34. The scene of the enrolment for taxation (26) would have been on the right side of Christ, celebrating the triumph of a politically and economically meritorious contemporary government. The primacy of the right is maintained throughout the church, as, for example, in the Last Judgement in the parekklesion. See Athanasios Semoglou's contribution to this volume.

FIGURE 3.7   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *The Magi's Journey* and
                The Magi meet with Herod
                PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK
                RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD
                UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Two miracles are represented across four images on the vault of the central bay, where the congregation stood before entering. The Wedding at Cana (45; Fig. 3.8) and the Feeding of the Five Thousand (46, 47; Fig. 3.9) both allude to the sacrament of the Eucharist celebrated inside the church.[107]

The exceptional motif of the slaying of the calf (44; Fig. 3.10) in the north-western pendentive is incorporated into the episode of the Wedding at Cana, exemplifying the sacrifice of Christ and thus also the Eucharist.[108]

This Eucharistic signification is further apparent in the placement of these scenes on the vault between the two lunettes above the entrance door, where the dedicatory figures of Christ (2) and the Virgin Blachernitissa (1) appear. It is notable that the main event within each scene is positioned in the eastern

107   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:121–24, pl. 228, 238–45; Underwood, "Some Problems," pp. 260, 264–67; Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring,", pp. 66–68; idem, "The Virgin," pp. 98–101; Nelson, "The Chora," pp. 67–69; idem, "Heavenly Allies," p. 33; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," pp. 233–34; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," p. 99.

108   The motif has no relation to the Wedding at Cana but rather originates from the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:23). Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:117–21, pl. 228–37 (pl. 230 for the slaying); Underwood, "Some Problems," pp. 266, 280; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," p. 234.

FIGURE 3.8 Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *The Wedding at Cana*
PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK
RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD
UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

FIGURE 3.9 Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*
PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK
RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD
UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

FIGURE 3.10   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *The Miracle at Cana* and
                The Slaying of the Calf
                PHOTO: NEKTARIOS ZARRAS

pendentives (45, 46), thus being visible when entering the esonarthex. From
this, it is clear that the west-east axis – including these two scenes in the por-
tico, along with the Presentation of Mary in the Temple (15; Fig. 3.3) and the
image of Mary fed by an angel (16) in the esonarthex – offered an insistent
visual prologue to the services that took place inside the church.[109]

When departing, the congregation took the same central east-west path,
with the image of the Virgin Blachernitissa (1) in front of them. Their direc-
tionality merged with that of the Magi's journey (28, 29; Fig. 3.7). Moreover,
they had to pass through the south door of the last bay beneath a depiction of
the Flight into Egypt (33), represented as a journey to a walled city, with idols
falling from the exterior of the Temple.[110]

In contrast to the congregation, the clergy left the exonarthex again through
the north door. The two episodes on the west wall of the north bays of the

---

109   Evangelatou, "Krater of Nectar and Altar of the Bread of Life," p. 92; Ćirić, "Theodore
       Metochites Mosaic at Chora," pp. 46–49.

110   The south door led to the gate and the city beyond. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*,
       1:97–98, pl. 182–83; Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 74, 77; Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images*, p. 163.
       The Falling Idols are not mentioned in the Gospel account nor in the Greek text of the
       Protoevangelium but are alluded to in the *Akathistos Hymnos*.

FIGURE 3.11   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *Joseph Dreaming* and *The Return of the Holy Family from Egypt*
PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

exonarthex – showing the return from Egypt (39; Fig. 3.11) and the departure for Jerusalem (40; Fig. 3.12) – are once again relevant for the procession in that they represent the act of travelling.[111]

The orientation of both scenes towards the north door attests that this was the exit point for the clergy.

Alongside the monumental polyptych constituted by the five eastern lunettes of the portico and the images mirroring the processional directions are compositions reflecting the personal aspirations of Metochites. The enrolment for taxation (26) in the northern lunette, for instance, allows for an exploration of the political function of the visual in Late Byzantine society.[112]

---

111   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:104–07, pl. 200–10; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 235–38; Nelson, "The Chora," p. 76.

112   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:84, 88–89, pl. 159–65; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Infancy of Christ," pp. 206–08; Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 56–82, esp. 59. About Metochite's tasks in fiscal functions: Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 73, 81–82, 94. Behind the Virgin, a gnarled tree is depicted. Underwood suggests that this is a visualization of Isaiah's prophecy (Is. 11:1) that a living branch will grow from the stem of Jesse.

FIGURE 3.12   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex: *The Journey to Jerusalem*
PHOTO: BYZANTINE INSTITUTE AND DUMBARTON OAKS FIELDWORK
RECORDS AND PAPERS, DUMBARTON OAKS, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD
UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The scene makes explicit reference to contemporary imperial ceremony and
to the career of Metochites.[113]

The cycle of the Infancy of Christ is a visual model of the procession that
took place in its vicinity. It begins where the clergy arrives in the exonarthex
for the Little Entrance. Accordingly, the images adjacent to where the laity
gathers – such as the Massacre of the Innocents – amplify the actions of the
congregation and demand from them, via personal experience and contempla-
tion, an emotionally charged empathy that corresponds perfectly to the goal of
the Little Entrance.[114] At the same time, eschatological connotations are called
up by the hierarchization of the left and right sides, with Christ in the centre.
The images become multivalent, also incorporating aspects of contemporary
politics as well as city topography.[115]

---

113   Nelson, "Taxation," p. 63; idem, "Heavenly Allies," pp. 33–34; Semoglou, "L'éloquence au
        service de l'archéologie," pp. 49–53; Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History*, p. 45.

114   Taft, *The Great Entrance*, pp. 192–94.

115   Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*, pp. 157–277.

The second cycle, namely, that of Christ's ministry, begins in the vaults of the exonarthex (where the infancy sequence ends) and follows a similar trajectory.[116] That each of the three cycles begins in the north part of the narthex – Christ's infancy and ministry in the exonarthex and the Marian sequence in the esonarthex – signalled both the real and the ritual entrance of the clergy from that direction. The complexity of the ministry cycle owes much to the proliferation of miracle accounts and saints' lives at the beginning of the 14th century.[117] Indeed, the selection is not chronological but consists of groupings with liturgical, thematic, and didactic influences.[118] The selection of scenes was certainly informed by the liturgy, namely, illustrating the Gospel lections read on successive weeks of the liturgical calendar.[119] One arrangement based on this principle is that of the miracles in the three pendentives of the bay in the south-west corner of the exonarthex, which visualize the feasts celebrated respectively on the fourth, fifth, and sixth Sundays between Easter and Pentecost: Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well (53), the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda (52), and the healing of the blind from birth (51).[120] Each makes symbolic reference to the Resurrection and emphasizes the importance of the healing water. This choice of theme might relate to the fact that the sacrament of baptism was celebrated on Pentecost. It is known from the typika that the liturgies of the consecration of the water, the Hagiasmos, took place in the narthex.[121]

Recently, in a detailed textual and iconographical analysis, Nektarios Zarras has explored the message of the ministry cycle through the lens of Metochites's literary oeuvre.[122] He demonstrates the relationship between the extensive

---

116 Underwood, *The Kariye Djami,* 1:29–30, 108–41, pl. 211–81; idem, "Some Problems," pp. 245–302; Ousterhout, *The Art*, pp. 58–65; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," pp. 226–40; Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*, pp. 323–26. None of Christ's parables were depicted.

117 Alice-Mary Talbot, "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), 153–73; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," pp. 227–28. Of the original 36 episodes, 28 are preserved.

118 Silvia Pasi, "Il ciclo del Ministero di Cristo nei mosaici della Kariye Djami: considerazioni su alcune scene," in *L'arte di Bisanzio e l'Italia al tempo dei Paleologi, 1261–1453*, ed. Mauro Della Valle, and Antonio Iacobini (Rome, 1999), pp. 183–94; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," p. 233.

119 Underwood, "Some Problems," pp. 248, 255–56.

120 Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:126–37, 250–57; idem, "Some Problems," pp. 257–62; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," p. 100. The feasts are recalled in the Pentekostarion. It is significant that the fourth pendentive, at the south-west, contains only some foliate ornament.

121 Bache, "La fonction," p. 31; Studer-Karlen, "Les typologies," pp. 136–42, 147. But as the church is a monastic katholikon, there was no celebration of baptisms.

122 Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 85–118.

cycle of Christ's healings in the Chora narthexes and the life and philosophical corpus of the founder. Indeed, baptism had an important signification of new life for Metochites, who emphasized Christ's status as the guarantor of the healing and salvation of mankind.[123] The scenes in the domical vault of the second bay – John the Forerunner bearing witness to Christ (42) and the Temptation of Christ (43) – amount to a fundamental ideological message about the triumph of the spiritual word.[124] The healings are symbols of the rebirth of the soul and the spirit and thus of the spiritual and corporeal restoration of man. Zarras is certainly right to conclude that the illustrations in the Chora convey Metochites's belief in the monastery itself as a place for healing the body and soul.[125]

Eight miracles are depicted on the surfaces beneath the dome in the south bay of the esonarthex: The healings of the blind and mute man (59), of the two blind men (62), of Peter's mother-in-law (61), of the woman with the issue of blood (60), of the man with the withered hand (58), of a man with leprosy (57), and of the multitudes (63), along with an unidentified miracle of healing (56).[126] These might correspond to the Gospel lections for the period from the third Saturday to the seventh Sunday after Pentecost.[127] With regard to the four miracles in the pendentives (59–62), it has been noted that for didactic purposes these show that both men and women could enjoy Christ's beneficence and forgiveness.[128] Moreover, their reserved compositions invoke movement from south to north, towards the entrance to the church; indeed, this station was the last for the clergy in the Little Entrance before entering the church.[129] Natalia Teteriatnikov interprets this selection as showing the virtues of the

---

[123]   Ibid., p. 98.

[124]   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:110–27, pl. 211–21; Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images*, pp. 163–67; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 87–98.

[125]   Zarras, "Illness and Healing," p. 104.

[126]   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami,* 1:124–37, pl. 246–57; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 107–13. The rare healing scenes led researchers to consider the existence of a hospital in the complex of the monastery. This is only attested by the healing cycle related to Metochites's broader thinking and personal desire for healing and salvation.

[127]   Underwood, "Some Problems," pp. 262–64, 297–301, pl. 277–81; Pasi, "Il ciclo del Ministero," pp. 185–88; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," p. 231.

[128]   Underwood, "Some Problems," pp. 267, 271, 280–89; Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," p. 38; Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*, pp. 323–24. This gender symmetry characterizes the overall programme of the two narthexes. Underwood, *Kariye Djami*, 1:27; Ousterhout, *Art of the Kariye*, 104; idem, *Finding a Place in History*, pp. 27–29, 53–55. See also Robert G. Ousterhout's contribution to this volume.

[129]   Mathews, *The Early Churches*, p. 141. The blessing and the preceding prayer were pronounced at the entrance to the naos when the celebrant was at the point of entering into the naos.

healing of the eight passions of the human soul.[130] And as mentioned above, the distinct architectural features of the bay suggest that it was a special space for commemoration. Another relationship can be decoded in the placement of the kneeling Melania immediately beneath the woman with the issue of blood (60) in the south-east pendentive, an alignment that may have stressed the personal medical history of the nun.[131] Overall, the programme of this bay emphasizes the importance of faith in individual salvation, and accordingly the space was used not only for commemorations but also for confessions and personal or prescribed penitence.[132]

From what we know, the narthexes served also for smaller daily services, for example the Diaklysmos. Indeed, various typika specify that the monks took part in a Diaklysmos in the narthex after the Divine Liturgy. This ritual consisted of a light meal, at which the monks would be given a piece of bread and a cup of wine.[133] The monks waited in the narthex for the bell to ring before departing for the refectory.[134] The nearby belfry as well as the trapeza in the north of the katholikon would also have been well suited to this practice. This means that the Diaklysmos partook of the west-east axis that proceeds in the exonarthex under the vault of the central bay, where the Eucharistic imagery is concentrated (44–47; Figs 3.8–3.10), and in front of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple (15; Fig. 3.3); afterwards, the clergy would have left the church via the north door of the exonarthex towards the trapeza.

---

130 Teteriatnikov, "The Place," pp. 173–74; David Knipp, "Narrative and Symbol. The Early Christian Image of the Haemorrhoissa and the Mosaics in the Narthex of the Kariye Camii," in *The Woman with the Blood Flow* (*Mark 5:24–34*): *Narrative, Iconic, and Anthropological Spaces,* ed. Barbara Baert, and Niels Schalley (Leuven, 2014), pp. 143–63, esp. 160–61.

131 Teteriatnikov, "The Place of," p. 171; Nelson, "The Chora," p. 76; Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," pp. 37–53; Knipp, "Narrative and Symbol," pp. 142–63; Rossi, "The Miracle Cycle," p. 235; Zarras, "Illness and Healing," pp. 110–11. Both Melania and the woman with the issue of blood would have provided models of penance and faith.

132 Schroeder, "Prayer and Penance," pp. 37–53.

133 Christine Stephan, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble. Die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche zu Thessaloniki* (Worms, 1986), pp. 173–75; Marinis, *Architecture and Ritual*, pp. 22–23, 110–11. This is found in a number of 11th- and 12th-century typika; see Paul Gautier, "Le typikon du Christ Saveur Pantocrator," *Revue des études byzantines* 32 (1974), 1–145, esp. 88, n. 5; Nicholl, "A Contribution," pp. 287–94. Although no consistent information can be found in the different typika, the Diaklysmos is a common feature of monastic ceremony.

134 Tomeković attributes a Eucharistic meaning to the Diaklysmos, associating it with the iconography in some narthexes and assuming a relationship between the spatial organization and the community gathering in the narthex for a meal. Tomeković, "Contribution à l'étude," pp. 47–49.

An interesting occurrence of the Diaklysmos is to be found in the Pantokrator typikon, which characterizes the ritual as an occasion for commemorating the ruling family and the donors.[135] A wish to guarantee this daily commemoration might offer another explanation for the presentation of Eucharistic symbolism alongside patronal images (3, 4) in this space.

In the exonarthex, there are two categories of saintly portraits: the martyr figures in the soffits of the arches and the figures of other saints on the pilasters.[136] All are dressed in courtly costumes, such that they would have resembled their aristocratic beholders. These resonances signalled that the saints were allies and friends.[137] For instance, portrayed nearest to the central lunette of Christ are St George (67) and St Demetrios (66), figures intimately connected with the Palaiologan family – and thus carrying a political message.[138] Between the enrolment for taxation (26) and the Nativity (27), St Andronikos (68) is shown looking down towards the former.[139] The homonym made reference to the emperor Andronikos II himself, who in this way became present in this heavenly allegory and allied with the political imagery of the Chora's patron.[140] Indeed, Metochites was one of the closest associates of the emperor and was allied with him through marriage.[141]

A Multi-Layered Programme

Thanks to the new dating of the Chora's mosaics to before 1317, they can now be considered part of the rich artistic milieu of the beginning of the 14th century, characterized by its mannerism and sophistication of form as well as its penchant for liturgical themes that reflect the rituals celebrated in sacred

---

135   Gautier, "Le typikon," p. 89. On the commemoration connected to the Diaklysmos: Constantin Andronikof, *Le cycle pascal: le sens des fêtes* (Lausanne, 1985), pp. 154–56; Stephan, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble,* p. 175; Nicholl, "A Contribution," pp. 285–308.

136   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:32–33, 152–63, pl. 282–313.

137   Nelson, "Heavenly Allies," pp. 31–40. A reference to the aristocracy is made also in some episodes, for instance in the courtly dress of the civil servants in the scene of the enrolment for taxation: Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Life of the Virgin," p. 172.

138   Nelson, "Heavenly Allies," pp. 35–36, figs 7–8; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 69–111.

139   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, pl. 294.

140   Ousterhout, *The Art*, p. 123; Nelson, "Heavenly Allies," p. 38; Magdalino, "Theodore Metochites," pp. 179–81; Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 70–78.

141   Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 84.

space.[142] The related yet discrete visual experiences activated in the Chora – via a series of sophisticated iconographic interconnections layered into the decorative programme – pertained to ritual, belief, and political-social standing.[143] The first and most basic layer was the liturgy performed daily in the building, consisting of the Divine Liturgy and, of particular relevance to the narthexes, the two processional entrances. During the Little Entrance, the congregation entered through the south gate, with its highly decorated exterior, including the inscription of the founder. Appearing in the first two bays of the exonarthex accessed by the congregation were scenes that indicated directions of movement. In the portico, the sequence with the Massacre of the Innocents (34–37) demanded intimate contemplation before participants stepped in front of the bust of Christ (2; Fig. 3.5) and the monumental polyptych (26–30), both imbued with eschatological meaning; finally, the congregation proceeded along the west-east axis into the naos. The clergy took a path from the north entrance of the portico, where the two Christological cycles begin. But rather than proceeding along the west-east axis, they continued southwards before turning to pass under the depiction of the Adoration of the Magi (31, when entering the south bay of the esonarthex) and the Deesis (4). Before the door, they awaited the signal for the introit. The congregation in the naos witnessed the appearance of the clergy, splendidly attired in the rich vestments of their order and bearing the Gospel and the Cross, symbols of Christ. The Little Entrance stands for the coming of Christ.[144]

The Great Entrance, on the other hand, consisted only of one participating group, namely, the clergy bearing the gifts. Once they reached the prothesis, they were no longer visible to the congregation standing in the naos. Via the northern annex, they headed to the north dome of the esonarthex, where the Marian cycle begins. The cycle prefigures the Passion and therefore also the Great Entrance. Passing through the main door of the esonarthex into

---

142   For the new dating: Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 60–111. According to recent research, the paintings of the Protaton on Mount Athos (1309–11) and the Deesis mosaic in Hagia Sophia (beginning of the second decade of the 14th century) also belong to this group: Konstantinos M. Vapheiades, "The Wall-Paintings of the Protaton Church Revisited," *Zograf* 43 (2019), 113–28; Konstantinos M. Vapheiades, "Reassessing a Late Byzantine Masterpiece: The Deesis Mosaic in the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 45/2 (2021), 166–83. Among the other mosaic ensembles from the early 14th century already known, the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (1310–14) is particularly noteworthy, as it was created by an artist whose style is similar to that of the painter who decorated the Protaton.

143   Smyrlis notes that the main motive of Metochites seems to have been the desire to be the benefactor of his city. Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," p. 86.

144   Mathews, *The Early Churches*, p. 140; Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," pp. 50–51.

the naos – carrying the gifts to the Temple, thus mirroring the bringing of the Virgin to the Temple (15), which is depicted over the door itself – they reappeared to the congregation. Each route found analogies in the imagery.

The next layer involved smaller services, like the Hagiasmos, the Diaklysmos, and the *Cherubikos Hymnos*, and the incorporation of the commemoration of the founders through the disposition of relevant scenes. Yet another layer can be observed: the mosaic panels condense and fuse events that took place over time.[145] Most importantly, the images engaged with the reality of daily life. The result was the provocation of emotional empathy in the observer. The visual programme finds a corollary in the philosophical oeuvre of Metochites and signals a commemorative and salvific intention. Certain religious images served to justify the secular realities of Metochites's career as well as his imperial aspirations.[146] It can be concluded that, given that the greater part of the cycle's course parallels the life and worldview of Metochites as expressed in his works as a whole, the cycle had a unique autobiographical character.[147]

It must be noted that the narthex and the portico housed a wide array of rites, including the Little and the Great Entrances, the daily Liturgy of the Hours, and the lesser services celebrated throughout the liturgical year. Although the congregation could see the Deesis when entering the church, the southern bay had an exclusivity, for the clergy at the Little Entrance as probably still for Metochites and his family as commemoration chapel. All rites unfolded without entering the parekklesion, which highlights its special function as a funeral chapel.

Nevertheless, the structure of the liturgy offers the basic explanation for the articulation of the architecture and imagery. In the Chora, the intended experience of the viewer was not only to observe works of art as a means of gaining knowledge of God but, moreover, to hope for salvation by engaging with the church's architectural-painterly theatre.

---

145   Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring," pp. 63–76; Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 56–82; Kermanidis, *Episteme and Ästhetik*, pp. 318–26.

146   This group concerns the images like the betrothal (with the reference to Simonis; 20; Fig. 3.4) and the enrolment for taxation (26), as well as the courtly depiction of the saints. Ultimately, the references to Hagia Sophia are also part of this group. On the motives of Metochites: Smyrlis, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites," pp. 84–95.

147   Zarras, "Illness and Healing," p. 117.

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Philotheus cpolitanus Patriarcha. *Ordo sacri ministrii*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 154:745–66. Paris, 1844–66.

Simeon of Thessaloniki, *De sacra liturgica*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 155:340. Paris, 1844–66.

Theodore Balsamon, *In epist. S. Dionysii Alexandrini ad Basilidem episcopum*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne, 138:465–68. Paris, 1844–66.

Theodore Metochites, *On Morals or Concerning Education*, translated by Sophia Xenophontos. Cambridge, Mass., 2020.

Secondary Sources

Alexopoulos, Stefanos. *The Presanctified Liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. A Comparative Analysis of its Origins, Evolution, and Structural Components*. Leuven, 2009.

Andronikof, Constantin. *Le cycle pascal: le sens des fêtes*. Lausanne, 1985.

Bache, Florence. "La fonction funéraire du narthex dans les églises byzantines du XIIe au XIVe siècle," *Histoire de l'Art* 7 (1989), 25–33.

Barrett, Richard. "Let Us Put Away All Earthly Care: Mysticism and the Cherubikon of the Byzantine Rite," *Studia patristica* 64 (2013), 111–24.

Barsky, Vasily Grigorovich. *Τα ταξίδια του στο Άγιον Όρος 1725–1726, 1744–1745* [His journeys to Mount Athos 1725–1726, 1744–1745]. Thessaloniki, 2010.

Belting, Hans. *Das Bild und sein Publikum im Mittelalter. Form und Funktion früher Bildtafeln der Passion*. Berlin, 1981.

Bornert, René. *Les commentaires byzantines de la divine liturgie du VIIe au XVe siècle*. Paris, 1966.

Boycheva, Yuliana. "L'aer dans la liturgie orthodoxe et son iconographie du xiiie siècle jusque dans l'art post-byzantin," *Cahiers archéologiques* 51 (2003), 169–94.

Boycheva, Yuliana. "Functions and Iconography of the Aer-Epitaphios: Byzantine Aeres-Epitaphioi of the 14th–15th Century Preserved in Bulgaria," *Medieval Bulgarian Art and Letters in a Byzantine Context*, edited by Elka Bakalova, Margaret Dimitrova, and M. A. Johnson, pp. 192–222. Sofia, 2017.

Brooks, Sara T. "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat., edited by Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout, pp. 23–32. New York, 2004.

Cameron, Averil. "The Early Cult of the Virgin," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, edited by Maria Vassilaki, pp. 10–17. Milan, 2000.

Caseau, Béatrice. "Experiencing the Sacred," in *Experiencing Byzantium*, edited by Claire Nesbitt, and Mark Jackson, pp. 59–77. Farnham, 2013.

Ćirić, Jasmina S. "Theodore Metochites Mosaic at Chora and the Relics of the True Cross," *Journal of Mosaic Research* 14 (2021), 41–51.

Cormack, Robin. "… and the Word was God: Art and Orthodoxy in Late Byzantium," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies*, edited by Andrew Louth, and Augustine Casiday, pp. 111–20. Aldershot, 2006.

Cunningham, Mary, Michael Featherstone, and Sophia Georgiopoulou. "Theodore Metochites's Poem to Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 100–16.

Cunningham, Mary. "The Use of the Protoevangelion of James in the 8th-century Homilies on the Mother of God," in *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium. Text and Images*, edited by Leslie Brubaker and Mary Cunningham, pp. 163–78. Ashgate, 2011.

Ćurčić, Slobodan. "The Twin-Domed Narthex in Paleologan Architecture," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 13 (1971), 333–44.

Descoeudres, Georges. *Die Pastophorien im syro-byzantinischen Osten: Eine Untersuchung zu architektur- und liturgiegeschichtlichen Problemen*. Wiesbaden, 1983.

Dolezal, Mary-Lyon, and Maria Mavroudi. "Theodore Hyrtakenos' Description of the Garden of St. Anna and the Ekphrasis of Gardens," in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, edited by Antony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmann, pp. 105–58. Washington, D.C., 2002.

Evangelatou, Maria. "Krater of Nectar and Altar of the Bread of Life: The Theotokos as Provider of the Eucharist in Byzantine Culture," in *The Reception of the Virgin in Byzantium: Marian Narratives in Texts and Images*, edited by Thomas Arentzen, and Mary Cunningham, pp. 77–119. Cambridge, 2019.

Featherstone, Michael. "Theodore Metochites's Eleventh Poem," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 81 (1988), 253–64.

Featherstone, Michael. *Metochites's Poems 'to Himself': Introduction, Text and Translation*. Vienna, 2000.

Galatariotou, Catia. "Byzantine ktetorika typika: a comparative study," *Revue des études byzantines* 45 (1987), 77–138.

Gautier, Paul. "Le typikon du Christ Saveur Pantocrator," *Revue des études byzantines* 32 (1974), 1–145.

Gerov, Georgi. "The Narthex as Desert: The Symbolism of the Entrance Space in Orthodox Church Buildings," in *Ritual and Art. Byzantine Essays for Christopher Walter*, edited by Pamela Armstrong, pp. 144–59. London, 2006.

Hawkes-Teeples, Steven. "The Prothesis of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy: What Has Been Done and What Remains," in *Rites and Rituals of the Christian East*, edited by Bert Groen, Daniel Galadza, Nina Glibetic, and Gabriel Radle, pp. 317–27. Leuven, 2014.

Hetherington, Paul. *The 'Painter's Manual' of Dionysius of Fourna: An English Translation with Commentary, of cod. gr. 708 in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library Leningrad*, 3rd ed. London, 1981.

Horn, Cornelia. "The Protoevangelium of James and Its Reception in the Caucasus," *Scrinium* 4 (2018), 223–38.

Jacoby, David. "The Catalan Company in the East: The Evolution of An Itinerant Army (1303–1311)," in *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach*, edited by Gregory I. Halfond, pp. 153–82. Farnham, 2015.

James, Liz. "Senses and Sensibility in Byzantium," *Art History* 27 (2004), 522–37.

Karahan, Anne. *Byzantine Holy Images and the Issue of Transcendence and Immanence. The Theological Background of the Late Byzantine Palaiologan Iconography and Aesthetics of the Chora Church, Istanbul*. Stockholm, 2005.

Kermanidis, Markos. *Episteme and Ästhetik der Raummodellierung in Literatur und Kunst des Theodore Metochites*. Berlin, 2020.

Klein, Holger A., Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, eds. *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered]. Istanbul, 2011.

Knipp, David. "Narrative and Symbol. The Early Christian Image of the Haemorrhoissa and the Mosaics in the Narthex of the Kariye Camii," in *The Woman with the Blood Flow (Mark 5:24–34): Narrative, Iconic, and Anthropological Spaces*, edited by Barbara Baert, and Niels Schalley, pp. 143–63. Leuven, 2014.

Krustev, Georgi. "A Poem of Maria Comnene Palaeologina from Manuscript No. 177 of the Ivan Dujčev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies," *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (1997), 71–77.

Lafontaine-Dosogne, Jacqueline. "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 163–94. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Lafontaine-Dosogne, Jacqueline. "Iconography of the Cycle of the Infancy of Christ," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 197–241. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Lafontaine-Dosogne, Jacqueline. "L'illustration de la première partie de l'hymne akathiste et sa relation avec les mosaïques de l'enfance de la Kariye Djami," *Byzantion* 54/2 (1984), 648–702.

Laiou, Angeliki E. *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II*. Cambridge, Mass., 1972.

Ledit, Joseph. *Marie dans la liturgie de Byzance*. Paris, 1976.

Magdalino, Paul, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and Constantinople," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 169–87. Istanbul, 2011.

Maguire, Henry. *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium*. Princeton, N.J., 1981.

Maguire, Henry. "*Abaton* and *Oikonomia*: St. Neophytos and the Iconography of the Presentation of the Virgin," in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, edited by Nancy P. Ševčenko, and Christopher Frederick Moss, pp. 95–105. Princeton, N.J., 1999.

Maguire, Henry, "Rhetoric and Reality in the Art of the Kariye Camii," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 57–69. Istanbul, 2011.

Marinis, Vasileios. "Defining Liturgical Space," in *The Byzantine Word*, edited by Paul Stephenson, pp. 284–302. London, 2010.

Marinis, Vasileios. *Architecture and Ritual in the Churches of Constantinople. Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries*. Cambridge, 2014.

Marinis, Vasileios. "On earth as it is in heaven? Reinterpreting the Heavenly Liturgy in Byzantine art," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 255–68.

Marinis, Vasileios. "Sacred Dimensions: Church Building and Ecclesiastical Practice," in *The Cambridge Companion to Constantinople*, edited by Sarah Bassett, pp. 180–99. Cambridge, 2022.

Mathews, Thomas. *The Early Churches of Constantinople. Architecture and Liturgy*. University Park, Pa., 1971.

Melvani, Nicholas. "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40.

Mouriki, Doula, "Αἱ βιβλικαί προεικονίσεις της Παναγίας εἰς τόν τροῦλλον της Περιβλέπτου τοῦ Μυστρά" [The biblical depictions of the Virgin Mary in the church of the Peribleptos in Mistra], *ΑΔ Μελέται* [Studies] 25 (1970), 217–51.

Moutafov, Emanuel. *Богородица вместилище на невместимото: човешки измерения на Палеологовото нзкуство в Конвтантинопол* [Theotokos, Container of the Uncontainable: Human Dimensions of Palaiologan Art in Constantinople]. Sofia, 2020.

Nelson, Robert S. "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

Nelson, Robert S. "Taxation with Representation. Visual Narrative and the Political Field of the Kariye Camii," *Art History* 22/1 (1999), 56–82.

Nelson, Robert S. "Heavenly Allies at the Chora," *Gesta* 43/1 (2004), 31–40.

Nicholl, Gail. "A Contribution to the Archaeological Interpretation of Typika: The Case of the Narthex," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050–1200*, edited by Margaret Mullet, and Anthony Kirby, pp. 285–308. Belfast, 1997.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25). Washington, D.C., 1987.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "The Virgin of the Chora: An Image and its Contexts," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, edited by Leslie Brubaker, and Robert G. Ousterhout, pp. 91–109. Urbana, Ill., 1995.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Contextualizing the Later Churches of Constantinople: Suggested Methodologies and a Few Examples," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 241–50.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Art of the Kariye Camii*. Istanbul/London, 2002.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "Reading Difficult Buildings: The Lessons of the Kariye Camii," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 95–105. Istanbul, 2011.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons*. Nicosia, 2017.

Pallas, Dimitris I. *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz. Der Ritus – das Bild*. Munich, 1965.

Papamastorakis, Titos, *Ὁ διάκοσμος τοῦ τρούλου τῶν ναῶν τῆς Παλαιολόγειας περόδου στὴ Βαλκανικὴ χερσόνησο καὶ τὴν Κύπρο* [The decoration of the dome of the churches of the Palaiologan period in the Balkan Peninsula and Cyprus]. Athens, 2001.

Pasi, Silvia. "Il ciclo del Ministero di Cristo nei mosaici della Kariye Djami: considerazioni su alcune scene," in *L'arte di Bisanzia e l'Italia al tempo dei Paleologi, 1261–1453*, edited by Mauro Della Valle, and Antonio Iacobini, pp. 181–94. Rome, 1999.

Popović, Svetlana. "Are typica sources for architecture? The Case of the Monasteries of the Theotokos Evergetis, Chilandri and Studenica," in *Work and Worship at the Theotokos Evergetis 1050–1200*, edited by Margaret Mullet, and Anthony Kirby, pp. 266–84. Belfast, 1997.

Rentel, Alexander. "The Origins of the 14th-Century Patriarchal Liturgical Diataxis of Dimitrios Gemistos," *Orientalia christiana periodica* 71 (2005), 363–85.

Rossi, Maria Alessia. "The Miracle Cycle between Constantinople, Thessalonike, and Mistra," in *From Constantinople to the Frontier: The City and the Cities*, edited by

Nicholas S.M. Matheou, Theofili Kampianaki, and Lorenzo M. Bondioli, pp. 226–40. Leiden, 2016.

Schroeder, Rossitza. "Prayer and Penance in the South Bay of the Chora Esonarthex," *Gesta* 48/1 (2009), 37–53.

Semoglou, Athanasios. "L'éloquence au service de l'archéologie. Les 'enfants aimés' de Théodore Métochite et sa bibliothèque dans le monastère de Chora," *Series Byzantina. Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art* 8 (2010), 45–65.

Ševčenko, Ihor, "Theodore Metochites, the Chora and the intellectual trends of his time," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 17–91. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Ševčenko, Nancy P. "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et donateurs dans le monde byzantin*, edited by Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota, pp. 189–205. Paris, 2012.

Smyrlis, Kostis. "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and His Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111.

Stephan, Christine. *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble. Die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche zu Thessaloniki*. Worms, 1986.

Studer-Karlen, Manuela. "Les typologies mariales dans l'art paléologue," *Byzantina* 36 (2019), 103–66.

Taft, Robert F. *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Pre-anaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. Rome, 1978.

Taft, Robert F. "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.

Taft, Robert F. *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*. New York, 1992.

Taft, Robert F. "In the bridegroom's absence. The Paschal Triduum in the Byzantine Church," in Robert F. Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), pp. 83–92.

Taft, Robert F. "Mount Athos: A late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite," in Robert F. Taft, *Liturgy in Byzantium and Beyond* (Aldershot, 1995), pp. 179–94.

Taft, Robert F.. "The Frequency of the Eucharist in Byzantine Usage: History and Practice," *Studi sull'oriente cristiano* 4 (2000), 103–32.

Taft, Robert F., and Stefano Parenti. *Il Grande Ingresso. Edizione italiana rivista, ampliata e aggiornata*. Grottaferrata, 2014.

Talbot, Alice-Mary. "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), 243–61.

Talbot, Alice-Mary. "Pilgrimage to Healing Shrines: The Evidence of Miracle Accounts," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002), 153–73.

Teteriatnikov, Natalia. "The Place of the Nun Melania (the Lady of the Mongols) in the Deesis Program of the Inner Narthex of Chora, Constantinople," *Cahiers archéologiques* 43 (1995), 163–80.

Teteriatnikov, Natalia. "The Dedication of the Chora Monastery in the Time of Andronikos II Palaiologos," *Byzantion* 66/1 (1996), 188–207.

Theis, Lioba. *Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau. Zur Befundsicherung, Rekonstruktion und Bedeutung einer verschwundenen architektonischen Form in Konstantinopel.* Wiesbaden, 2005.

Tomeković, Svetlana. "Contribution à l'étude du programme du narthex des églises monastiques (XIᵉ–première moitié du XIIIᵉ s.)," *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 140–54.

Tomić Đjurić, Marka. "To Picture and to Perform: The Image of the Eucharistic Liturgy at Markov Manastir (I)," *Zograf* 38 (2014), 123–42.

Trempelas, Panayiots N. *Αι τρεις λειτουργίαι κατά τους εν Αθήναις κώδικας* [The three liturgies according to the codexes of Athens]. Athens, 1982.

U, Maréva. "Images et passages dans l'espace ecclésial à l'époque médiobyzantine," in *Visibilité et Présence de l'Image dans l'espace ecclésial*, edited by Sulamith Brodbeck, and Anne-Oange Poilpré, pp. 301–27. Paris, 2019.

Underwood, Paul A. *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols. New York, 1966.

Underwood, Paul A., ed. *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background.* Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Underwood, Paul A., "Some Problems in Programs and Iconography of Ministry Cycles," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 245–302. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Vapheiades, Konstantinos M. "The Wall-Paintings of the Protaton Church Revisited," *Zograf* 43 (2019), 113–28.

Vapheiades, Konstantinos M. "Reassessing a Late Byzantine Masterpiece: The Deesis Mosaic in the Hagia Sophia of Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 45/2 (2021), 166–83.

Woodfin, Warren T. "Wall, Veil, and Body: Textiles and Architecture," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 371–85. Istanbul, 2011.

Woodfin, Warren T. *The Embodied Icon. Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium.* Oxford, 2012.

Zarras, Nektarios. "Remarks on Donor and Other Narrative Inscriptions of the Chora Monastery," in *Materials for the Study of Late Antique and Medieval Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Istanbul*, edited by Ida Toth, and Andreas Rhoby, pp. 175–88. Oxford/Vienna, 2020.

Zarras, Nektarios. "Illness and Healing. The Ministry Cycle in the Chora Monastery and the Literary Oeuvre of Theodore Metochites," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 75 (2021), 85–119.

CHAPTER 4

The Anastasis in the Funerary Chapel of Chora Monastery in Constantinople: Meaning and Historical Interpretations

Athanasios Semoglou

The monumental decoration of the Chora's katholikon consists of two main features: its personalized character and its realization in stages, a fact that is reflected in the adaptability of the iconographic programmes applied in the two narthexes.[1] These characteristics have already been pointed out and analysed in relation to the sources drawn upon for the painted decoration of the monument. Unprecedented and extremely rare compositions, such as the enrolment for taxation,[2] or even paradoxical arrangements, like the extensive narration of the cycle of the Massacre of the Innocents in the exonarthex, are witnesses to the personal relevance of the decoration for the church's learned donor, the savant and Megas Logothetes (Μέγας Λογοθέτης) Theodore Metochites.[3] The logic of equivalence relations is omnipresent throughout the programme, demonstrating the involvement of the illustrious *ktetor* Metochites. Vis-à-vis the image of good governance, for example, 'Euclidean relations' seem to have advanced the identification of Cyrenius, Eparch of Syria, with Metochites. This identification is verified, moreover, by their similar garments, as Robert S. Nelson demonstrated,[4] as well as by their 'symmetrical opposition' to the unjust power embodied by King Herod, who is represented on the other side of the exonarthex, thereby corresponding diagonally as an opposite pole.[5] In this context, the story of the Infancy of Christ in the exonarthex of the katholikon can be understood to take on the aspect of a

---

1 Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols (New York, 1966), 1:35.

2 Robert S. Nelson, "Taxation with Representation: Visual Narrative and the Political Field at the Kariye Cami," *Art History* 23 (1999), 56–82.

3 Ibid., p. 75. See also: Athanasios Semoglou, "L'éloquence au service d'archéologie. Les 'enfants aimés' de Théodore Métochite et sa bibliothèque dans le monastère de Chora," *Series Byzantina. Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art* 8 (2010), 45–65. See also the contribution of Manuela Studer-Karlen to this volume.

4 Nelson, "Taxation," pp. 58–59; idem, "Heavenly Allies at the Chora," *Gesta* 43/1 (2004), 31–40, esp. 34.

5 Nelson, "Taxation," p. 73.

---

social critique, loaded with contemporary political messages. These relational readings are supported by the iconographic similarities between Herod ordering the massacre and Cyrenius in the scene of the enrolment. In each case, the visual relevance of the one who represents power reinforces the social point of view. Alternatively, these two portraits of rulers model critiques of different aspects of power and their effects in the economy of salvation.[6] In this regard, it is worth recalling all of Metochites's comments on the good governor in the first *Βασιλικός*, that is, the first encomium of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos.[7]

A similar logic of reflection is also central to the gesture and attitude of the founder shown kneeling on the lunette above the Royal Door, offering his church to the enthroned Christ while petitioning for salvation and redemption from sin. Metochites therefore presents himself as a visual equivalent to the anonymous basileus placed in a comparable position, i.e. on the lunette above the Royal Door, in the church of Hagia Sophia, while generating many further associations with the imperial mosaics of the latter church.[8] This set of identifications is seen even more strongly in the lateral chapel, the iconographic programme of which was designed to fulfil the burial requirements of the space.[9] Moreover, Robert G. Ousterhout has already emphasized the fundamental differences between the katholikon and the chapel of the Chora as pertains to the content and meaning of their programmes, the former being oriented towards the subject of the Incarnation and the latter towards that of salvation and redemption.[10]

Combining to signal the notion of salvation are the scenes of the Descent into Hell, which fills the semi-dome of the apse, along with the raisings of

6   Semoglou, "L'éloquence," p. 54.

7   Ioannis Polemis, ed., *Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης. Οι δύο Βασιλικοί Λόγοι* (Κείμενα Βυζαντινής Λογοτεχνίας) [Theodoros Metochitis. The two royal Speeches] (Texts of Byzantine Literature)] 4 (Athens, 2007), I, ch. 11–12, pp. 215–25.

8   Nancy P. Ševčenko, "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et Donateurs dans le monde byzantin. Actes du colloque international de l'Université de Fribourg*, ed. Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota, Réalités Byzantines 14 (Paris, 2012), pp. 189–205, esp. 193. For the references in Metochites's portrait to the mosaics of Hagia Sophia, see also: Robert S. Nelson, "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

9   Engin Akyürek, "Funeral Ritual in the Parekklesion of the Chora Church," in *Byzantine Constantinople. Momuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoglu, (Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2001), pp. 89–104.

10   Robert G. Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76, esp. 66–69.

FIGURE 4.1   General view of the lateral chapel of Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

the son of the widow of Naim (Luke 7: 11–17) and of Jairus's daughter (Mark 5: 21–43, Matt. 9: 18–26, Luke 8: 40–56), in each side of the apse, crowned by a monumental Last Judgement (Fig. 4.1).

The latter progresses in a unique way into the eastern domical vault, as well as into the eastern part of the northern and southern walls, giving the impression of a three-dimensional representation and communicating to the viewer the intense drama of the Last Judgement.[11] The composition of the Second Parousia features Christ the Judge seated in glory on a rainbow, flanked by the

---

11   Athanasios Semoglou, "Damned in Hell, Damned in the Church. Imagery and Space in Byzantium," in *Hell in the Byzantine World. A History of Art and Religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Angeliki Lymberopoulou (Cambridge, 2020), 1:281–309, esp. 302.

FIGURE 4.2   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, lateral chapel, eastern domical vault:
Last Judgement
PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

figures of the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist in supplication and surrounded by enthroned apostles and a large array of angels (Fig. 4.2).[12]

Paradise is depicted on the lunette of the north wall, over the door that leads to the diakonikon of the katholikon,[13] pointing to the Eucharistic role of the composition[14] – as is also the case in the diakonikon of the Metropolis

---

12   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3: pl. 204.

13   Ilhan Akşit, *Museum of Chora: Mosaics and Frescoes* (Istanbul, 2005), p. 140.

14   We have to note that the Eucharistic role of the composition is also based on its proximity to, among others, the image of Abraham carrying poor Lazarus, painted on the north-east pendentive, thus illustrating the commemoration of the deceased during the Eucharistic liturgy and their call by Germanos of Constantinople to rest with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the mystical banquet of the Kingdom of God; see Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "Aspects de la relation entre espace liturgique et décor peint à Byzance," in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque de 3e Cycle Romand de Lettres*, ed. Nicolas Bock, Peter Kurmann, Serena Romano, and Jean-Michel Spieser (Rome, 2002), pp. 71–88, esp. 76–77.

at Mystras.[15] Correspondingly, the depiction of hell extends directly across the eastern end of the southern wall.[16] In the chapel of the Chora, the torments of hell are limited to the four symbolic 'communal punishments' – easily recognizable and widely used, being derived from the Gospels.[17] Meanwhile, individual punishments are absent, having no place in this exclusively private chapel of a great monastic katholikon in the capital, especially one of such high-profile sponsorship.[18]

However, as the most personalized aspect of the Last Judgement, the decoration of the pendentives of the eastern domical vault is notable, for it constitutes a separate iconographic programme. The eastern pendentives host Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom and the Rich Man of the Lukan parable. In the south-west pendentive, the earth and the sea are depicted giving up their dead, and in the north-west pendentive appears an unusual representation of an angel leading a naked soul to Christ the Judge.[19] The latter composition is a *unicum* in the corpus of Byzantine scenes of the Last Judgement, as already pointed out by Paul A. Underwood.[20] Sirarpie Der Nersessian commented on this composition, seeing it as a personalized and imaginative episode in which the archangel Michael leads the soul of the founder before Christ the Judge.[21] This reading was based on the independent nature of the image, on its proximity to the alleged tomb of Metochites, as well as on the content of the founder's *logos*, in which he pleads to the archangel to mediate for him on the day of Judgement.[22] Once again, this interpretation, which as far as I am aware has never been challenged, supports the highly personalized character of the iconographic programme of the lateral chapel. Likewise, the parable of the Rich Man is eloquently intertwined with the personalized scene of Metochites's soul being led before the Judge, justifying the use and function of

---

15   Gabriel Millet, *La dalmatique du Vatican* (Paris, 1945), pp. 38–39. See also Suzy Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra* (Paris, 1970), pl. 7, sch. V.

16   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3: pl. 209.

17   The Gnashing of Teeth, the Outer Darkness, the Sleepless Worm, and the Everlasting Fire.

18   Semoglou, "Damned in Hell," pp. 302–03.

19   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3: nos 205–08.

20   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:208.

21   Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*, ed. Paul A. Underwood (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 305–49, esp. 331.

22   Eleni Kaltsogianni, "Theodore Metochites and His Logos on the Archangel Michael: An Essay on the Text's Sources and Its Intellectual background," *Parekbolai* 5 (2015), 17–52, esp. 22.

FIGURE 4.3 Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, lateral chapel, apse: *The Anastasis*
PHOTO: PAUL A. UNDERWOOD, *THE KARIYE DJAMI*, VOL. 3 (NEW YORK, 1966),
PL. 341

this evangelical narrative in connection with the donor himself and his post-humous fears and hopes for the salvation of his soul.[23]

For the composition of the Anastasis in the apse was chosen the symmetri-cal formula with Christ removing Adam and Eve from the sarcophagi, to either side of their redeemer (Fig. 4.3).[24]

Directing his gaze to the viewer, Christ walks with great strides towards Adam while turning his body slightly towards the figure of Eve. The luminous garments of Christ combined with the same shades of white, grey, and blue of his mandorla which is following the movements of his body accurately describe "the king of glory who enters as a man and all the dark places of Hades were illuminated," according to the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, which constitutes the principal source for the composition (21:3). The painter skil-fully exploits the entire surface of the concave space in order to display a large number of figures, who participate in the drama of the scene.

The placement of the Descent into Hell in the apse requires special atten-tion. Although the Anastasis is a composition widely disseminated in Byzantine iconography, it is very rarely depicted in the apse of the sanctuary, whether in metropolitan or peripheral arts of the East. The prototype could only be the

---

23   Semoglou, "Damned in Hell," pp. 305–07.
24   Anna D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image* (Princeton, N.J., 1986), p. 9.

Anastasis of the apse of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where the episode of the Resurrection is believed to have taken place.[25] This image, now lost, was altered during the Crusader era, sometime after the execution of a decorative programme with mosaics and frescoes in 1149. As the Anastasis mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem no longer exists, is must be reconstructed from the descriptions of travellers – for example, those of the Persian pilgrim Nasir Chosrau, who visited the holy places in 1047 and reported being impressed[26] – and especially from other compositions that are considered to be faithful copies of the lost mosaic. According to Alan Borg, the scene in the Holy Sepulchre would have been identical in iconography to the Anastasis illustrated in the British Library Codex Egerton 1139, known as the Queen Melisende Psalter, which dates to 1131–43 (Fig. 4.4; fol. 9v).[27]

This hypothesis is based on the Greek inscription that accompanies the composition and, in particular, on certain formulae thought to reproduce the motifs of the ancient Byzantine mosaic of the Holy Sepulchre.[28]

However, if the iconography of the Anastasis of the Holy Sepulchre is reflected in the schema of the Queen Melisende Psalter, then the composition in the Chora bears no resemblance to it. The symmetrical iconography, the frontality of Christ, and the absence of the flying angels holding a labarum make the Constantinopolitan formula distinctly different from the one formerly in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude a possible influence exerted by the Holy Sepulchre on the choice of the location of the composition in the Chora's apse. Another such example is the church of the Resurrection at Abu Ghosh, near Jerusalem, a building of the Hospitallers dating to 1160–70, the central apse of which houses the Anastasis (Fig. 4.5)[29] – part of a larger

25   Alan Borg, "The Lost Apse Mosaic of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem," in *The Vanishing Past: Studies in Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology Presented to Christopher Hohler*, ed. Alan Borg, and Andrew Martindale (Oxford, 1981), pp. 7–12, esp. 7–8.

26   I owe this information to Nada Hélou, "Le décor des absides dans les églises médiévales du Liban," *Iconographica* 5 (2006), 32–47, esp. 41.

27   Borg, "The Lost Apse Mosaic," 7–12. See also Jaroslav Folda, "Queen Melisende's Psalter," in *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261*, exh. cat., ed. Helen C. Evans, and William D. Wixom (New York, 1997), pp. 392–94.

28   Folda, "Queen Melisende's Psalter," p. 393.

29   Alberto Virdis, "Le absidi di Abu Gosh. Pittura murale in Terrasanta nel XII secolo," in *Itinerando. Senza confini dalla preistoria ad oggi. Studi in ricordo di Roberto Coroneo*, ed. Rossana Martorelli, Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Storia, Beni culturali e Territorio dell'Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Archaeologia, Arte e Storia 1.2 (Perugia, 2015), pp. 545–61, esp. 547, fig. 2.

FIGURE 4.4 British Library, London, Codex Egerton 1139 (The Queen Melisende Psalter), fol. 9v: *The Anastasis*

FIGURE 4.5 Church of the Resurrection, Abu Ghosh (Jerusalem District, Israel), apse:
The Anastasis
PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF GEOFFREY MEYER-FERNANDEZ

iconographic programme reflecting the decoration of the famous pilgrimages of the Holy Land.[30]

For her part, Nada Hélou integrates into the sphere of influence of the Holy Sepulchre the placement of the Anastasis in the apse of the sanctuary in two churches: St Phocas in Amioun (Fig. 4.6) and the rupestrian church of Quidisset Shmouni in the Qadisha Valley, both in present-day northern Lebanon and dating from the end of 12th or beginning of the 13th century.[31]

---

30   Gustave Kühnel, *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Berlin, 1988), p. 176. See also Gil Fishhof, "Hospitaller Patronage and the Mural Cycle of the Church of the Resurrection at Abu-Ghosh (Emmaus) – A New Reading," in *The Military Orders*, vol. 6.1, *Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, ed. Jochen Schenk, and Mike Carr (London/New York, 2017), pp. 81–93; Geoffrey Meyer-Fernandez, "Le décor peint de l'église d'Abu Gosh (troisième quart du XIIᵉ siècle): miroir de lieux saints de Syrie-Palestine," in *L'église d'Abu Gosh. 850 ans de regards sur les fresques d'une église franque en Terre Sainte*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Delzant (Paris, 2018), pp. 123–36.

31   Erica Cruikshank Dodd, "Christian Arab Painters under the Mamluks," *ARAM* 9–10 (1997–98), 257–88, esp. 260–62, fig. 1; Hélou, "Le décor," pp. 40–41, fig. 15.
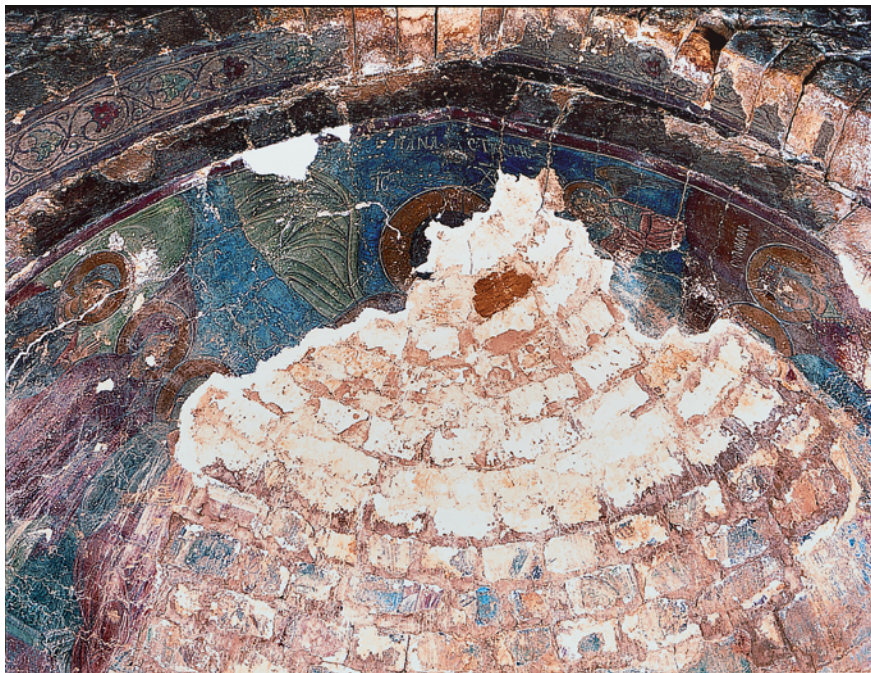
FIGURE 4.6   St Phocas Church, Amioun (northern Lebanon), apse: *The Anastasis*
PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF MAHMOUD ZIBAWI

Although the frescoes of the latter church have been destroyed, those at St Phocas allow us to distinguish between the influence of the Palestinian pilgrimage on the iconography and the position of the scene in the Libanese monument. Thus, following this example, such an arrangement in the chapel of the Chora would testify to the ambitious plan – even to the pretentiousness, or better the 'snobbery'[32] – of Metochites to advance, at the artistic level, parallel readings between his chapel and the Holy Sepulchre. Similar associations to the sanctity of the Holy Land would also have been evoked by the carved crosses in the lower third of two jambs of the west portal to the naos, which probably housed metal content with fragments of relics of the True Cross.[33]

Another indication of this influence of the Holy Land on the programme of the Chora's chapel may be the combination of the Anastasis with the Last Judgement in an eschatological ensemble in the sanctuary. Moreover, this

32   Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen, 1959), p. 142.

33   Jasmina S. Ćirić, "Theodore Metochites Mosaic at Chora and the Relics of the True Cross," *Journal of Mosaic Research* 14 (2021), 41–51, esp. 46.

FIGURE 4.7   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, lateral chapel, apse: *Abel*, detail from
The Anastasis
PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

solution was also adopted in the church of Abu Ghosh but in different artistic
terms, in that the Last Judgement is shared between the north apse – which
hosts the Deesis, the core of the Second Parousia – and the south apse, which,
as a clear reference to paradise, represents the saved souls in the bosom of the
three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.[34] It is precisely the idea of salva-
tion that is emphasized in the two monuments, but, above all, the very notion
of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the place of eternal salvation, as Annemarie Weyl
Carr judiciously demonstrated for the case of Abu Ghosh.[35]

At the Chora, what catches our attention in the Anastasis is the juvenile
figure of Abel, presented standing on the sarcophagus of his mother, Eve
(Fig. 4.7).[36]

---

34   Virdis, "Le absidi," p. 547.

35   Annemarie Weyl Carr, "The Mural Paintings of Abu Gosh and the Patronage of Manuel
      Comnenus in the Holy Land," in *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Jaroslav Folda,
      British Archeological Reports, International Series 152 (Oxford, 1982), pp. 215–44, esp.
      220–21.

36   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 3: no. 201, pl. 340–59.

His originality lies first of all in his breaking away from the group to form a counterpart to St John the Baptist. He is further distinguished by his sumptuous clothing as well as his static position compared to the other figures of the composition, a detail that gives him a "statue-like quality," as Sotiria Kordi noted.[37] Turned towards Christ, but with his gaze directed towards the spectator, Abel lifts his shepherd's crook with his right hand, a symbol of his pastoral function that is lacking, however, from the compositions of the Descent into Hell.[38] The collar, sleeves, and ends of his long himation are decorated with golden embroidery, referring more to princely garb than to that of a shepherd. The length of his himation reveals his purple-violet breeches. The similarities between Abel's attire and that of the king-prophets Solomon and David behind Adam are striking, and strange.

In fact, Der Nersessian pointed out the prominent appearance of Abel and his sumptuous clothes in the composition, without further elaborating.[39] For his part, Underwood noted parallels between Abel's luxurious garments and those of certain martyrs who appear in the mosaic decoration of the exonarthex, such as St Andronikos, the martyr of Cilicia.[40] Yet the righteous kings from the genealogy of Christ, the Three Magi, and the eparch Cyrenius all wear similar clothing, as well.[41] Abel's mode of dress should be considered unusual, despite the overall festive character and spirit of luxury that qualifies the figures and compositions in the Constantinopolitan monument; indeed, we find no other instances in which Abel is depicted in royal attire, except in the case of the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki (1315).[42] At the Chora, both Abel's manner of dress and prominent placement in the scene are peculiar and call for specific reflection.

It should be noted that the canonical and apocryphal literature offer only indirect allusions to the royal aspect of Abel. Precise references that could justify his exceptional representation are to be found neither in Genesis (4:1–15)

37   Sotiria Kordi, *The Chora Parekklesion as a Space of Becoming* (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2013), p. 156.

38   Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, pp. 209–10. For examples, see also Ioanna Stoufi-Poulimenou, *Η Βυζαντινή Ανάστασις. Ζητήματα της παλαιολόγειας εικονογραφίας* [The Byzantine Anastasis. Issues of Palaiologan Iconography] (Athens, 2019), pp. 94–95, fn. 397.

39   Der Nersessian, "Program and Iconography," p. 322.

40   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:194–95.

41   Ibid., 2: nos 55, 56, 103, pls. 73, 173, 176.

42   Andreas Xyngopoulos, *Η ψηφιδωτή διακόσμηση του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων Θεσσαλονίκης* [The mosaic Decoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki] (Thessaloniki, 1953), pl. 28.

nor in the apocryphal text of the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*.[43] In addition, the fact that the passage from the apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, according to which Abel "received two crowns out of his gift and his virginity, because he did not admit any filth in his flesh" (7:2), would not be sufficient to support depicting Abel with royal attributes. In contrast to the Bible, where Abel is not characterized as righteous, Pseudo-Matthew recast this figure as the first righteous one, the first martyr, and the first man to take a vow of virginity.[44] He was, moreover, considered a foreshadowing of Christ on account of his qualities as a shepherd, namely charity, virginity, and sacrifice. These virtues of Abel may well be at the origin of the pale almond-green colour chosen for his himation in the Chora, a colour that, in its luminosity, approximates that of the tunic of Christ.

Similarly, the parallels between the life of Abel (as the youngest shepherd) and that of David – rooted in a song that the prophet sings after his anointment by Samuel as king of Israel (Biblical Antiquities 59:4) – seem insufficient to explain the genesis of the royal type of Abel.[45] Despite the analogies between the two figures, each a victim of the jealousy of his own brother, there is still nothing sufficient to justify an iconography of Abel in royal clothes at Chora.

On the other hand, Magdalena Łaptaś compares the tunic of the young Abel with the sticharion, an ecclesiastical garment worn by the entire hierarchy of the clergy. She thus interprets Abel's crook as a pastoral tool with which he leads the souls of the faithful, like a righteous patriarch.[46] However, this clerical identification of Abel comes up against the colour of his tunic, which, although luminous, is far from being white as described by John Chrysostom, as well as by Sophronios of Jerusalem, Germanos of Constantinople, and Euthymios of Thessaloniki, who testify to the durability of the white sticharion throughout the Byzantine period and ascribe it an angelic whiteness reflecting the beauty and purity of the soul.[47] The only exception is during the Lenten period, when the sticharion of the clergy shifts to purple.

43   André Dupont-Sommer and Marc Philonenko, eds., *La Bible. Écrits intertestamentaires* (Paris, 1987), pp. 1771–73.

44   François Bovon and Pierre Geoltrain, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (Paris, 1997), 1:126.

45   Dupont-Sommer and Philonenko, *La Bible*, p. 1381.

46   Magdalena Łaptaś, "An 'Enigmatic Man' in the *Anastasis* Scene from the Lower Church in Banganarti. An Attempt at Identification," *Études et travaux* 28 (2015), 105–20, esp. 114–17.

47   Konstantinos Koukopoulos, *Το χρώμα των ιερών αμφίων στη λειτουργική μας παράδοση* [The Colour of the Holy Vestements in our liturgical Tradition] (MA thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2012), p. 105. Available at http://ikee.lib.auth.gr/record/129621 /files/ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΗ%20ΔΙΠΛΩΜΑΤΙΚΗ%20ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ.pdf. Accessed 8 Nov 2021.

The insufficiency of the written sources on this point is compounded by the rarity of the images of Abel until the 14th century. As noted above, in Byzantium the only representation of Abel comparable to that of the Chora is found in the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki, which dates from 1315 (Fig. 4.8).

The figure of Abel does not, however, occupy such a prominent place as in the Constantinopolitan chapel. Here, he wears a tunic with a collar embroidered in gold, although treated in a much more modest and summary manner. In addition, the bottom of his tunic does not feature gold embroidery, and the sleeves are not visible, being hidden by the framing figures of Eve and the righteous. The golden collar of Abel in Thessaloniki seems to have followed the detail of the yellow collar that appears in the church of Protaton, at Karyes on Mount Athos, a work of the Astrapas painters from Thessaloniki dating to the last quarter of 13th century (Fig. 4.9).[48]

In the Athonite example, the traces of the yellow colour on the shoulders above the greyish tunic of the young shepherd indicate that this is not an embroidered collar but rather the front part of a cloak that hangs down the figure's back, thus being hidden from view. We believe that in the church of the Holy Apostles the case is exactly the same, the only difference being the much narrower width of the collar and the use of golden tesserae in lieu of yellow paint.

Nevertheless, vestiges of this iconographic peculiarity can be sought in the figures of Abel from the above-mentioned churches of St Phocas in Amioun[49] and Abu Ghosh in Jerusalem, despite their fragmentary state of preservation. His metallic shade collar and golden sleeves in the first example (see Fig. 4.6) and his brownish coat in the second (Fig. 4.10), along with the crop of reddish hair evident in both cases, all establish analogies with the Chora, while supporting the hypothesis of the Constantinopolitan monument's indirect relationship to the Holy Sepulchre, as noted above.

---

48   Gabriel Millet, *Monuments de l'Athos*, vol. 1, *Les peintures* (Paris, 1927), pl. 19.2. For a plate in colour, see: Agioreitiki Estia, ed., *Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος. Εκ του Ιερού ναού του Πρωτάτου* [Manuel Panselinos. From the Holy Church of the Protaton] (Thessaloniki, 2003), pl. 23. On the question of the dating of Protaton's frescoes, see Athanasios Semoglou, "Ο Χριστός Αναπεσών στο Πρωτάτο και η δυναστική προπαγάνδα του Ανδρονίκου Β´ Παλαιολόγου," [Christ Anapeson in Protaton and the dynastic Propaganda of Andronikos II Palaiologos], *Βυζαντινά* [Byzantina] 37 (2019–20), 93–112, esp. 105–06. I do not support a late dating of the paintings of Protaton to the 14th century because of the lack of solid arguments concerning the iconographic programme of the monument.

49   Cruikshank Dodd, "Christian Arab Painters," pp. 262, 276, fig. 4.

FIGURE 4.8   Church of the Holy Apostles, Thessaloniki, eastern part of northern arc: *Abel*,
                  detail from *The Anastasis*
                  PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

FIGURE 4.9 Church of Protaton, Karyes (Mount Athos), eastern part of northern arc: *Abel*, detail from *The Anastasis*
PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

FIGURE 4.10   Church of the Resurrection, Abu Ghosh (Jerusalem District, Israel), apse: *Abel*,
detail from *The Anastasis*
PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE OF GEOFFREY MEYER-FERNANDEZ

However, neither of these examples highlights Abel in such a panegyric way nor as clearly as at the Chora; indeed, in each he remains a secondary and withdrawn figure, behind his mother, Eve.

To sum up, there remains no satisfactory explanation to justify the prominent position ascribed to Abel in Chora Church – neither this murdered figure's status as a foreshadowing of Christ and his Crucifixion, nor the symbolism of the Church vis-à-vis Cain, who symbolizes the Synagogue, particularly in the art of the moralized Bibles of the High Middle Ages.[50]

However, if the theological texts fail to interpret this unusual detail, we must look elsewhere for explanation, namely, to the historical conditions of the period. The fratricide committed by Andronikos III, the grandson of Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and son of Michael IX, provoked a very violent civil war with his grandfather, and this historical event could be revealing in this regard. I am referring more specifically to the assassination of Prince Manuel Palaiologos, on 1 or 2 October 1320, by the soldiers of his brother, following a love affair, according to Nikephoros Gregoras.[51] This act not only caused much mourning and sadness to their father, Michael IX – who died a few days after the announcement of the death of his youngest son and of his daughter Anne, wife of the despot of Epirus, Thomas Doukas – but also angered the assassin's grandfather, Andronikos II.[52] Some historians see behind this event more than an erotic rivalry, namely, an effort on the part of Andronikos III to remove a powerful competitor for the succession to the throne, especially given the vicissitudes of his relationship with Andronikos II.[53]

The analogies between the lives of Abel and of the young prince Manuel Palaiologos are remarkable. Both fell victim to the jealousy and antagonism of their brothers, with their murders leaving their parents in deep mourning. Moreover, the very interpretation of the name Abel associates it with mourning and affliction, according to certain apocryphal texts, such as the third homily of Pseudo-Clement (26:1).[54] An identification of the young prince Manuel with

50   See the conclusions of Sabine Maffre, *L'iconographie de Caïn et Abel en France du XIᵉ siècle au début du XVIᵉ siècle* (PhD diss., École des chartes, 2010).

51   Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, and Immanuel Bekker, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1829), VIII, 13, 1, 284.

52   Constantinou P. Kyrri, *Η πρώτη φάσις της έριδος των δύο Ανδρονίκων* [The first phase of the dispute between the two Andronikoi] (PhD diss., University of Ioannina, Nicosia, 1982), p. 7.

53   Ursula Victoria Bosch, *Kaiser Andronikos III. Palaiologos. Versuch einer Darstellung der Byzantinischen Geschichte in den Jahren 1321–1341* (Amsterdam, 1965), p. 15.

54   Pierre Geoltrain, and Jean Daniel Kaestli, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* (Paris, 2005), 2:1290–91.

Abel would therefore seem logical, given the exceptionally emphatic place-ment of the biblical figure in the scene of the Anastasis, as well as his mode of dress, which speaks to a royal origin that is not supported by any known religious sources. In addition, it is interesting to point out that the light green chosen for his himation, which mirrors the colour of the steatite icons, would have evoked both the purity of his character and the high honorary title of *protovestiarios*, granted to certain future emperors, such as Alexios V and Ioannis III Vatatzes.[55]

In this context, the Raising of the Widow's Son and of Jairus's Daughter, compositions which frame the Anastasis in the apse, would have taken on fur-ther meaning, not simply because they relate to the funerary function of the space but because they aspire to the resurrection of a young man and young woman, Prince Manuel and Princess Anne, respectively, while at the same time articulating the deep mourning of their family.

Admittedly, such an interpretation would have effects on the dating of the decoration of the chapel as well as on its functions. Indeed, in terms of function, this hypothesis would transform the space from a private funer-ary chapel for Metochites and his family into an imperial one. Although the official mausoleum for the Palaiologan family was the church of St John the Baptist, built towards the end of the 13th century by the empress Theodora during the restoration of the katholikon of the Lips Monastery,[56] several mem-bers of the dynastic family were buried elsewhere, including Chora Monastery. The most significant example is tomb E in the exonarthex, which has been identified as that of Irene Raoulaina Palaiologina, the widow of the emperor's brother Constantine Palaiologos and the mother-in-law of Metochites's daugh-ter Irene.[57] Other tombs are attributed, albeit tentatively, to members of the Palaiologoi, such as tomb F, based on the monograms of the dynasty,[58] and the later tomb H on the north wall of the inner narthex, which Underwood attrib-utes to the despot Demetrios Palaiologos, the son of Emperor Andronikos II.[59]

---

55   Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, *Byzantine Icons in Steatite*, Byzantina Vindobonensia 15 (Vienna, 1985), pp. 79–85; Henry Maguire, *Nectar and Illusion. Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature* (Corby, 2012), pp. 131–32; Alexander Kazhdan, "Protovestiarios," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (New York/Oxford, 1991), 3:1749.

56   Theodore Macridy, "The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Paleologi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), 253–77, esp. 269–72.

57   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:280–88 and 3: pl. 540–45.

58   Ibid., 1:288–92 and 3: pl. 546–47.

59   Ibid., 1:295–99 and 3: pl. 550–53; Sarah T. Brooks, "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium. The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, ed. Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout (New York, 2004), pp. 23–31, esp. 29, fig. 11. See also Nikoleta Troupkou, "Ο τάφος του

FIGURE 4.11   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, lateral chapel, apse, excavated tomb
                PHOTO: ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT, *THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE KARIYE CAMII IN ISTANBUL* (WASHINGTON, D.C., 1987), FIG. 90

I wonder, in conclusion, whether an important person such as the murdered young prince could have been buried in the ground in front of the apse of the chapel, which was excavated in 1958 (Fig. 4.11).

However, I cannot concur with the hypothesis maintaining that this central tomb belongs to the founder, Metochites.[60] Rather, Underwood's identification

δεσπότη Δημητρίου στη Μονή της Χώρας και η Παναγία Ζωοδόχος Πηγή," [The Tomb of the Despot Demetrios in Chora Monastery and the Virgin Zoodochos Pege], *Βυζαντιακά* [Byzantiaka] 33 (2016), 301–17.

60   Sharon E.J. Gerstel, "The Chora Parekklesion, the Hope for a Peaceful Afterlife, and Monastic Devotional Practices," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], ed. Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2011), pp. 107–45, esp. 133–36.

of tomb A as that of the donor[61] seems more compatible with the iconographic programme of the adjacent space, with its very personalized character.[62] Furthermore, the selection of such an eminent placement for his own tomb would have been an exaggerated option and ostensibly arrogant even in the case of a private chapel. On the other hand, if this tomb in the sanctuary was an exceptional addition to the chapel, as Ousterhout suggests,[63] then an attribution to Prince Manuel Palaiologos would seem logical in light of its urgency and unforeseen nature. Regardless, the plundering of the tomb in modern times makes it impossible to further advance this supposition.

The adaptation of the adjacent diakonikon via its renovation with paintings in the 14th century, and especially via its connection with the funerary parekklesion to form a separate space, could be better justified within the framework of this hypothesis: by these means, it was transformed into a space that combines the characteristics of a small side chapel,[64] possibly intended to house the tomb of Prince Manuel Palaiologos. The decoration of the dome in the diakonikon with the figures of the apostles (Fig. 4.12),[65] far from being typical for the late period,[66] would likely have been inspired by another famous Constantinopolitan monument, namely, the church of the Holy Apostles, which does not survive but whose function as a mausoleum is well known.[67]

On the southern portion of the west wall of the diakonikon, the decoration of the frescoed niches with crosses on a white background[68] could evoke a place of deposition and veneration of relics, such as that of the True Cross,[69]

61   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:270–72. See also Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Washington, D.C., 1987), p. 59. Ousterhout's remark that the tomb was enlarged in order to include other members of his family finds me in full agreement.

62   Brooks, "The History and Significance," pp. 25–26.

63   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 60, fig. 90.

64   Ibid., p. 46.

65   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:264–66 and 3: pls. 525–29.

66   In the Palaiologan period, the iconographic formula of Christ surrounded by the apostles in the dome is only found in the scene of the Ascension, and even such examples are very limited; see Titos Papamastorakis, *Ο διάκοσμος του τρούλου των ναών της Παλαιολόγειας περιόδου στη Βαλκανική χερσόνησο και την Κύπρο* [The Dome Decoration of the Palaiologan Churches in the Balkan Peninsula and Cyprus] (Athens, 2001), pp. 259–60.

67   Richard Krautheimer, *Zur Konstantins Apostelkirche in Konstantinople. Ausgewälte Aufsätze zur Europäischen Kunstgeschichte* (Cologne, 1988), pp. 81–90. See also Nikolaos Gkioles, *Ο Βυζαντινός τρούλλος και το εικονογραφικό του πρόγραμμα (μέσα 6ου αι.–1204)* [The Byzantine Dome and its pictorial program (Middle 6th c. – 1204)] (Athens, 1990), pp. 162–63. See also the latest publication of the monument by Margaret Mullett and Robert G. Ousterhout, eds., *The Holy Apostles. A Lost Monument, a Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past* (Washington, D.C., 2020).

68   Ousterhout, *The Architecture*, p. 49.

69   Ćirić, "Theodore Metochites Mosaic," pp. 41–51.

FIGURE 4.12   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, diakonikon, dome
                PHOTO: ATHANASIOS SEMOGLOU

defining a function that would have been absolutely compatible with the over-all funerary character of the space. Finally, according to our hypothesis, the programme of the apse could not have been completed until 1321.[70] It would therefore have been one of the works with which the painters concluded a challenging project – a project that came to fruition over several years and was marked by the drama of its time, which would intensify in the years to come.

---

70   Kostis Smyrlis backdated the completion of the works in the Chora from 1321 to 1317, based on a document from the monastery of St John the Prodrome in Serres; see idem, "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and His Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111. However, if the decoration of Chora dates from 1310–15, we are faced with the major question of the simultaneous presence of the same scribes and perhaps the same workshops of artists who seem to have worked in the church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki; see Nikoleta Troupkou, *Η Ελληνική γραφή των εντοίχιων ψηφιδωτών της Ύστερης Βυζαντινής περιόδου* [The Greek Script in wall mosaics of the late Byzantine Period] (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2016) pp. 1, 168–69; see also Efthymios Tsigaridas, *Θεσσαλονίκη. Η Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική σε ναούς της πόλεως (9ος-15ος αιώνας)* [Thessaloniki: The Byzantine Painting in the City's Churches (9th–15th century)], (Athens, 2021), p. 279, figs 27–28, 323–26, and 331–32. In addition, given the non-urgent nature of the funeral function of the side chapel, unlike the rest of the naos, the temporal disconnection of its decoration from the restoration executed in the katholikon would seem a logical hypothesis. Moreover, later decorative phases are already attested in the side chapel and precisely on the tomb of Michael Tornikes (after 1328) in the south wall of the western bay; see Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:276–80.

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Bovon, François, and Pierre Geoltrain, eds. *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens I.* Paris, 1997.

Dupont-Sommer, André, and Marc Philonenko, eds. *La Bible. Écrits intertestamentaires.* Paris, 1987.

Geoltrain, Pierre, and Jean Daniel Kaestli, eds., *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens II*. Paris, 2005.

Nikephoros Gregoras. *Byzantina historia*, edited by Ludwig Schopen, and Immanuel Bekker (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae). Bonn, 1829.

Polemis, Ioannis, ed. *Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης. Οι δύο Βασιλικοί Λόγοι,* Κείμενα Βυζαντινής Λογοτεχνίας [Theodoros Metochitis. The two royal Speeches] (Texts of Byzantine Literature)] 4. Athens, 2007.

Secondary Sources

Agioreitiki Estia, ed. *Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος. Εκ του Ιερού ναού του Πρωτάτου* [Manuel Panselinos. From the Holy Church of the Protaton]. Thessaloniki, 2003.

Akşit, Ilhan. *Museum of Chora: Mosaics and Frescoes*. Istanbul, 2005.

Akyürek, Engin. "Funeral Ritual in the Parekklesion of the Chora Church," in *Byzantine Constantinople. Momuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, edited by Nevra Necipoglu, pp. 89–104. Leiden/Boston/Cologne, 2001.

Borg, Alan. "The Lost Apse Mosaic of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem," in *The Vanishing Past: Studies in Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology presented to Christopher Hohler*, edited by Alan Borg, and Andrew Martindale, pp. 7–12. Oxford, 1981.

Bosch, Ursula Victoria. *Kaiser Andronikos III. Palaiologos. Versuch einer Darstellung der Byzantinischen Geschichte in den Jahren 1321–1341*. Amsterdam, 1965.

Brooks, Sarah T. "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium. The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine*

Institute Restoration, edited by Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout, pp. 23–31. New York, 2004.

Ćirić, Jasmina S. "Theodore Metochites Mosaic at Chora and the Relics of the True Cross," *Journal of Mosaic Research* 14 (2021), 41–51.

Cruikshank Dodd, Erica. "Christian Arab Painters under the Mamluks," *ARAM* 9–10 (1997–98), 257–88.

Der Nersessian, Sirarpie, "Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion," in *The Kariye Djami.* vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 305–49.

Dufrenne, Suzy. *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra* (Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 4). Paris, 1970.

Evans, Helen C., and William D. Wixom, eds. *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261*, exh. cat. New York, 1997.

Fishhof, Gil. "Hospitaller Patronage and the Mural Cycle of the Church of the Resurrection at Abu-Ghosh (Emmaus) – A New Reading," in *The Military Orders. vol. 6.1, Culture and Conflict in the Mediterranean World*, edited by Jochen Schenk and Mike Carr, pp. 81–93. London/New York, 2017.

Gerstel, Sharon E.J. "The Chora Parekklesion, the Hope for a Peaceful Afterlife, and Monastic Devotional Practices," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 107–45. Istanbul, 2011.

Gkioles, Nikolaos. *Ο Βυζαντινός τρούλλος και το εικονογραφικό του πρόγραμμα (Μέσα 6ου αι.–1204)* [The Byzantine Dome and its pictorial program (Middle 6th century – 1204]. Athens, 1990.

Hélou, Nada. "Le décor des absides dans les églises médiévales du Liban," *Iconographica* 5 (2006), 32–47.

Jolivet-Lévy, Catherine. "Aspects de la relation entre espace liturgique et décor peint à Byzance," in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque de 3e Cycle Romand de Lettres*, edited by Nicolas Bock, Peter Kurmann, Serena Romano, and Jean-Michel Spieser, pp. 71–88. Rome, 2002.

Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, Ioli. *Byzantine Icons in Steatite* (Byzantina Vindobonensia 15). Vienna, 1985.

Kaltsogianni, Eleni. "Theodore Metochites and His Logos on the Archangel Michael: An Essay on the Text's Sources and Its Intellectual background," *Parekbolai* 5 (2015), 17–52.

Kartsonis, Anna D. *Anastasis. The Making of an Image*. Princeton, N.J., 1986.

Kazhdan, Alexander, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. New York/Oxford, 1991.

Kordi, Sotiria. *The Chora Parekklesion as a Space of Becoming*. PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2013.

Koukopoulos, Konstantinos. *Το χρώμα των ιερών αμφίων στη λειτουργική μας παράδοση* [The Colour of the Holy Vestements in our liturgical tradition]. MA thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2012.

Krautheimer, Richard. *Zur Konstantins Apostelkirche in Konstantinople. Ausgewälte Aufsätze zur Europäischen Kunstgeschichte*. Cologne, 1988.

Kühnel, Gustave. *Wall Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Berlin, 1988.

Kyrri, Constantinou P. *Η πρώτη φάσις της έριδος των δύο Ανδρονίκων* [The first phase of the dispute between the two Andronikoi]. PhD diss., University of Ioannina, Nicosia, 1982.

Łaptaś, Magdalena. "An 'Enigmatic Man' in the *Anastasis* Scene from the Lower Church in Banganarti. An Attempt at Identification," *Études et travaux* 28 (2015), 105–20.

Macridy, Theodore. "The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Paleologi," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), 253–77.

Maffre, Sabine. *L'iconographie de Caïn et Abel en France du XIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle*. PhD diss., École des chartes, 2010.

Maguire, Henry. *Nectar and Illusion. Nature in Byzantine Art and Literature*. Corby, 2012.

Mango, Cyril. *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*. Copenhagen, 1959.

Meyer-Fernandez, Geoffrey. "Le décor peint de l'église d'Abu Gosh (troisième quart du XIIe siècle): miroir de lieux saints de Syrie-Palestine," in *L'église d'Abu Gosh. 850 ans de regards sur les fresques d'une église franque en Terre Sainte*, edited by Jean-Baptiste Delzant, pp. 123–36. Paris, 2018.

Millet, Gabriel. *Monuments de l'Athos, I. Les peintures*. Paris, 1927.

Millet, Gabriel. *La dalmatique du Vatican*. Paris, 1945.

Mullett, Margaret, and Robert G. Ousterhout, eds., *The Holy Apostles. A Lost Monument, a Forgotten Project, and the Presentness of the Past*. Washington, D.C., 2020.

Nelson, Robert S. "Taxation with Representation: Visual Narrative and the Political Field at the Kariye Cami," *Art History* 23 (1999), 56–82.

Nelson, Robert S. "The Chora and the Great Church: Intervisuality in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 67–101.

Nelson, Robert S. "Heavenly Allies at the Chora," *Gesta* 43/1 (2004), 31–40.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul*. Washington, D.C., 1987.

Nelson, Robert S. "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34/1 (1995), 63–76.

Papamastorakis, Titos. *Ο διάκοσμος του τρούλου των ναών της Παλαιολόγειας περιόδου στη Βαλκανική χερσόνησο και την Κύπρο* [The Dome decoration of the Palaiologan Churches in the Balkan Peninsula and Cyprus]. Athens, 2001.

Semoglou, Athanasios. "L'éloquence au service d'archéologie. Les 'enfants aimés' de Théodore Métochite et sa bibliothèque dans le monastère de Chora," *Series Byzantina. Studies on Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Art* 8 (2010), 45–65.

Semoglou, Athanasios. "Damned in Hell, Damned in the Church. Imagery and Space in Byzantium," in *Hell in the Byzantine World. A History of Art and Religion in Venetian Crete and the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by Angeliki Lymberopoulou, 2 vols. Cambridge, 2020), 1:281–309.

Semoglou, Athanasios. "Ο Χριστός Αναπεσών στο Πρωτάτο και η δυναστική προπαγάνδα του Ανδρονίκου Β' Παλαιολόγου" [Christ Anapeson in Protaton and the dynastic Propaganda of Andronikos II Palaiologos], *Βυζαντινά* [Byzantina] 37 (2019–20), 93–112.

Ševčenko, Nancy P. "The Portrait of Theodore Metochites at Chora," in *Donations et Donateurs dans le monde byzantin. Actes du colloque international de l'Université de Fribourg*, edited by Jean-Michel Spieser, and Elisabeth Yota, pp. 189–205 (Réalités Byzantines 14). Paris, 2012.

Smyrlis, Kostis. "Contextualizing Theodore Metochites and His Refoundation of the Chora," *Revue des études byzantines* 80 (2022), 69–111.

Stoufi-Poulimenou, Ioanna. *Η Βυζαντινή Ανάστασις. Ζητήματα της παλαιολόγειας εικονογραφίας* [The Byzantine Anastasis. Issues of Palaiologan Iconography]. Athens, 2019.

Troupkou, Nikoleta. *Η Ελληνική γραφή των εντοίχιων ψηφιδωτών της Ύστερης Βυζαντινής περιόδου* [The Greek Script in wall mosaics of the late Byzantine Period]. PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2016.

Troupkou, Nikoleta. "Ο τάφος του δεσπότη Δημητρίου στη Μονή της Χώρας και η Παναγία Ζωοδόχος Πηγή" [The Tomb of the Despot Demetrios in Chora Moanstery and the Virgin Zoodochos Pege], *Βυζαντιακά* [Byzantiaka] 33 (2016), 301–17.

Tsigaridas, Efthymios. *Θεσσαλονίκη. Η βυζαντινή ζωγραφική σε ναούς της πόλεως (9ος – 15ος αιώνας)* [Thessaloniki: The Byzantine Painting in the City's Churches (9th–15th century)]. Athens, 2021.

Underwood, Paul A. *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols. New York, 1966.

Underwood, Paul A., ed. *The Kariye Djami.* vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background.* Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Virdis, Alberto. "Le absidi di Abu Gosh. Pittura murale in Terrasanta nel XII secolo," in *Itinerando. Senza confini dalla preistoria ad oggi. Studi in ricordo di Roberto Coroneo*, edited by Rossana Martorelli (Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Storia, Beni culturali e Territorio dell'Università degli Studi di Cagliari, Archaeologia, Arte e Storia 1.2), pp. 545–61. Perugia, 2015.

Weyl Carr, Annemarie. "The Mural Paintings of Abu Gosh and the Patronage of Manuel Comnenus in the Holy Land," in *Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Jaroslav Folda, pp. 215–44 (British Archeological Reports, International Series 152). Oxford, 1982.

Xyngopoulos, Andreas. *Η ψηφιδωτή διακόσμηση του ναού των Αγίων Αποστόλων Θεσσαλονίκης* [The mosaic Decoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki]. Thessaloniki, 1953.

Tomb G at the Chora and the Illusion of Presence

Michele Bacci

The extraordinary decorative ensemble in Chora Church includes a fragmentary mural painting (Fig. 5.1) that has generally been met with surprise, even puzzlement, in the scholarly debate.

Since the very moment of its rediscovery in the second bay (so-called 'tomb G') of the west wall of the outer narthex, researchers have acknowledged its stylistic eccentricity vis-à-vis the other figurative components of the pictorial complex, which came soon to be celebrated as the most important such complex from Palaiologan times.[1] Indeed, tomb G stood out distinctly for its idiosyncratic stylistic features, its approach to spaces and bodies resonating more closely with the arts of the Italian Renaissance than with Byzantine visual habits.

Even though only its lower portion has been preserved, its compositional and iconographic structure is easy to recognize. On the right, it displays an elegantly clad lay figure, wearing a richly decorated, charcoal-coloured caftan, tied at the waist, under a black, long-sleeved mantle. From these clothing details, we infer that this is a male figure.[2] He stands on a perspectively rendered floor of grey-veined marble before the enthroned Mother of God, rendered in a foreshortened view. Mary is seated on a red cushion within a wooden chair with a tall back and curved armrests. The base of the throne, which is decorated with floral motifs on its narrower side and with a rounded window at its front, is not directly connected to the nearby suppedaneum, embellished with recessed panels that are rectangular in shape. The Virgin wears a long, purple mantle characterized by gently twisting hems and voluminous, concentric folds that cling to and make visible the underlying body. Oddly enough, the Christ Child, whose ochre-golden himation compels the beholder's attention,

---

1   Otto Demus, "The Style of the Kariye Camii and Its Place in the Development of Palaeologan Art," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*, ed. Paul A. Underwood (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 107–60.

2   As remarked by Sarah T. Brooks, *Commemoration of the Dead: Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration* (*Mid-Thirteenth to Mid-Fifteenth Centuries*) (PhD diss., New York University, 2002), p. 307. See also Maria Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography* (*11th-15th Centuries*) (Leiden, 2002), pp. 339–40.

FIGURE 5.1   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, exonarthex, tomb G: *Aristocratic Layman
Standing before the Virgin and Child Enthroned*, mural painting, *c.*1450
PHOTO: MICHELE BACCI

rests atop both of his mother's knees. Most likely, the green appearance of the
background is the result of gradual oxidation of azurite pigment, and thus it
can be assumed to have originally been blue in colour. The composition is
delimited by a red and white frame.

      In most cases, scholars have stressed the naturalistic qualities of this image:
the way in which it simulates the material setting of figures in space; avoids
any dimensional shift between human and sacred persons; fictively evokes the
figures' bodily presence; and, in the treatment of clothing, imitates the mate-
riality and ornamentation of real textiles. Paul A. Underwood had no doubts
that "this is the first painting found in Constantinople in which clear-cut and
precise evidence of direct Renaissance influence can be observed."[3] For Cyril
Mango, tomb G "transports us into a different world," on account of its Italian
style.[4] Viktor Lazarev concluded that the outstanding Quattrocento features

---

3   Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (London, 1966), 1:294–95. See also Robert G. Ousterhout,
      The Art of the Kariye Camii (Istanbul/London, 2002), p. 88.

4   Cyril A. Mango, *Chora: The Scroll of Heaven* (Istanbul, 2000), p. 247.

of the image were enough to rule out the authorship of a Greek painter and pointed to the activity of an Italian master in Chora Monastery shortly before the fall of Constantinople.[5] Meanwhile, Robin Cormack described this fragment as the most evident witness to the skilful capacity of Byzantine artists to appropriate and reproduce the pictorial conventions and techniques of others[6] – in this case, the features of mid-15th-century Florentine painting.[7]

In essence, all these interpretations stress the visual distinctiveness of the composition – in terms of its temporalities and aesthetic attitudes – when compared to the surrounding mosaics. Its perspectival depiction of space seems at odds with the rest of the Chora's decor, where the simulation of depth is interspersed with the rendering of built structures from different, and mutually contrasting, viewpoints.[8] Tomb G departs from this multi-focal approach of Palaiologan painters in favour of the principles of linear perspective, creating the illusion of a three-dimensional environment defined by visual axes that converge at a geometrically constructed vanishing point. Additionally, a major difference can be detected in the use of light, which penetrates the composition from the bottom left, thus illuminating the narrower side of the throne, Mary's legs, and the left half of the supplicant's robe while leaving other areas in shadow (the front of the Virgin's chair and suppedaneum, as well as the lay figure's back side). This choice clashes with the penchant of Byzantine painters for chromatic balance as a unifying factor in the construction of visual forms.[9]

Despite its lamentable state of preservation, the Chora fragment provides a clear – albeit isolated – indication that optically deceptive solutions like those promoted by Italian Renaissance artists were appreciated and diffused also in 15th-century Constantinople. Even if a great many recent studies have managed to deconstruct the biased view that Byzantine arts had little interaction with the West, scholars are generally inclined to think that the encounter between Italian and Palaiologan forms was rather commonplace

---

5   Viktor Lazarev, *Storia della pittura bizantina* (Turin, 1967), p. 412, fn. 21.

6   Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2018), p. 180.

7   Robin Cormack, "… and the Word was God: Art and Orthodoxy in Late Byzantium," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies*, ed. Andrew Louth, and Augustine Casiday (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 111–20, esp. 117.

8   Anne Karahan, *Byzantine Holy Images – Transcendence and Immanence. The Theological Background of the Iconography and Aesthetics of the Chora Church* (Leuven, 2010), pp. 202–05.

9   Konstantinos Vapheiades, Ὑστερη Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική. Χώρος και μορφή στην τέχνη της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, 1150–1450 [Late Byzantine Painting. Space and Form in the Art of Constantinople, 1150–1450] (Thessaloniki, 2021), p. 384.

in Venetian-ruled Crete,[10] in Hospitaller Rhodes,[11] and in Lusignan Cyprus,[12] but was much more episodical, and to some extent controversial, in the imperial capital.[13] Undoubtedly, this perception is enhanced by the lack of any

10   See, among others, Maria Vassilaki, "Western Influences on the Fourteenth-Century Art of Crete," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), 305–11; Stella Papadaki-Oekland, "Δυτικότροπες τοιχογραφίες του 14ου αιώνα στην Κρήτη. Η άλλη όψη μιας αμφίδρομης σχέσης" [Western-like Mural Painting on Crete. The Other Side of a Mutual Relationship], in *Εὐφρόσυνον. Ἀφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* [Euphrosynon. Studies in Honour of Manolis Chatzidaki] (Athens, 1992), 2:491–513; Maria Vassilaki, *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete* (Farnham, 2009); Anastasia Drandaki, "Between Byzantium and Venice: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Origins of El Greco. Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, ed. Anastasia Drandaki (New York, 2009), pp. 11–18; Olga Gratziou, "*A la latina. Ζωγράφοι εικόνων προσανατολισμένοι δυτικά*" [*Alla latina*. Icon Painters with Western Orientation], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 33 (2012), 357–68; Anastasia Drandaki, "Piety, Politics, and Art in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 71 (2017), 367–406; Michele Bacci, *Βένετο-βυζαντινές αλληλεπιδράσεις στη ζωγραφική των εικόνων (1280–1450)* [Veneto-Byzantine Interactions in Icon Painting (1280–1450)] (Athens, 2021).

11   Elias E. Kollias, *Η μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου* [The Medieval Town of Rhodes and the Palace of the Great Master] (Athens, 1994), pp. 109–31; Elias E. Kollias, *Η μνημειακή εκλεκτική ζωγραφική στη Ρόδο στα τέλη του 15ου και στις αρχές του 16ου αιώνα* [The Monumental Eclectic Painting in Rhodes at the End of the 15th and the Beginnings of the 16th Century] (Athens, 2000); Theodoros A. Archontopoulos and Angeliki Katsioti, "Η ζωγραφική στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου από τον 11ο αιώνα μέχρι την κατάληψή της από τους Τούρκους (1522)" [Painting in the Medieval Town of Rhodes from the 11th Century until the Turkish Conquest (1522)], in *15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου* [15 Years of Conservation Works in the Medieval Town of Rhodes] (Athens, 2007), pp. 454–65; Theodoros A. Archontopoulos, *Ο ναός της Αγίας Αικατερίνης στην πόλη της Ρόδου και η ζωγραφική του ύστερου Μεσαίωνα στα Δωδεκάνησα (1309–1453)* [The Church of Saint Catherine in the Town of Rhodes and Late Medieval Painting in the Dodecanese (1309–1453)] (Rhodes/Athens, 2010).

12   See esp. Ioanna Christoforaki, "Η τέχνη στην Κύπρο την εποχή του Μαχαιρά και του Βουστρωνίου" [Art in Cyprus in the Times of Machaeras and Boustronios], in *Λεόντιος Μαχαιράς – Γεώργιος Βουστρώνιος. Δυο χρονικά της μεσαιωνικής Κύπρου* [Leontios Machaeras: Two Chronicles of Medieval Cyprus], ed. Loukia Loizou-Chatzigavriel (Nicosia, 1997), pp. 87–96; Annemarie Weyl Carr, *Cyprus and the Devotional Arts of Byzantium in the Era of the Crusades* (Aldershot, 2005); Michele Bacci, "The Art of Lusignan Cyprus and the Christian East: Some Thoughts on Historiography and Methodology," in *The Art and Archaeology of Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus (1192–1571). Recent Research and New Discoveries*, ed. Michalis Olympios, and Maria Parani (Turnhout, 2019), pp. 21–42.

13   See the critical remarks by Robin Cormack, "Η ζωγραφική των εικόνων στην Κωνσταντινούπολη γύρω στο 1400" [Icon Painting in Constantinople around 1400], in *Χείρ Αγγέλου. Ένας ζωγράφος εικόνων στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη* [The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete], ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens, 2010), pp. 48–57, esp. 52, who stresses the parallelism between the icons by the hand of Angelos and the wall painting in tomb G at the Chora.

convincing comparison with Constantinople's pictorial arts of the first half of the 15th century, which one must bear in mind are represented by very few artworks in situ. The bust-length figures of saints found in 1957 in the exterior arcades of the Atık Mustafa Paşa Camii, which can be dated to the 1430s or 1440s and were originally part of a decorative programme for burial spaces, look quite different in their strongly outlined draperies, their frontal poses, and their disproportionate bodies: accordingly, the two scholars who first published them deemed them completely unrelated in style to tomb G, despite its chronological proximity.[14]

In short, the composition in the outer narthex of the Chora contradicts our perception of Byzantine art as grounded in aesthetic – and ideological – principles that inescapably came into conflict with the optical simulation of nature so obsessively pursued by Italian artists. Standing out as a *unicum*, it has been described in various terms as a foreign 'intruder' into the artistic landscape of Constantinople, but the very fact that the composition proved to be the last pictorial work executed in the city before its fall to the Ottomans leaves interpreters with a number of disquieting, though mostly unexpressed, doubts: Does the composition indicate that a major change in taste took place among the Greek inhabitants of the Polis in their last decades of independence? And does this mean that an Italianate pictorial trend would have been developed locally, had the empire survived? According to Underwood, the image offered "an intimation of what [the artistic dialogue with Italy] might have been, had history taken another course."[15] In his view, the basic reasoning for such a shift was to be sought in the intensified exchange with Latin Europe in the aftermath of the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–39). This idea is shared by Liz James, who surmises that the adoption of a more naturalistic, Florentine-inspired style was in some way associated with the pro-Unionist ideology of an important sector of the Church and society of Late Byzantium.[16]

There is hardly any doubt that the council left a strong impact not only on politics but also on the cultural life and the figurative arts of the period: in Italy, it may have contributed to a renewed interest in icons,[17] and, in the Greek-speaking realm, it may have sparked the dissemination of images that

14   Thomas F. Mathews and Ernest J. W. Hawkins, "Notes on the Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii in Istanbul and Its Frescoes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 125–34.

15   Underwood, *The Kariye Camii*, 1:295.

16   Cormack, "Word was God," p. 117.

17   Byzantinizing images became widespread as supports for both individual and collective prayer, sometimes through their transformation into objects deemed to be miracle-working, especially from the mid-15th century onwards. See Michele Bacci, "Images à la grecque et agentivité miraculeuse à l'époque moderne," in *L'image miraculeuse dans le*

were meant to convey ecumenical messages, such as the icons displaying Peter and Paul embracing each other or jointly holding a model of a church.[18] For the participants, the council offered an opportunity to observe and become acquainted with Italy's newest artistic achievements, many of which were appreciated and in fact described with amazement. Orthodox visitors were struck by the beauty of profane and sacred buildings alike, as well as by the elegance of the gardens and the precious appearance of locally produced textiles. Meanwhile, they expressed surprise, even puzzlement, upon encountering the three strategies by which Italian artists managed to create the illusion of lifelikeness.

Among these three strategies, theatre was probably the most powerful. In Florence, the conciliar fathers were twice invited to watch a *sacra rappresentazione*: the Annunciation play staged in the Santissima Annunziata on 25 March 1439, and the Ascension play that took place in Santa Maria del Carmine on 14 May of the same year. In both cases, the sacred events were performatively re-enacted in a space shared by the beholders and actors. The latter fictively embodied the main personages of Christian history and simulated their material presence by speaking, moving, and gesturing, or even by hovering over the audience, as in the case of the funambulists who played the role of angels. The mise-en-scène was enhanced by painted sceneries, curtains opened and redrawn as needed, light and sound effects, fireworks, and a sophisticated machinery that enabled the staging of the descent of the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) on the Virgin Mary or of the vertical ascent of Christ towards heaven, accompanied by liturgical chants and a blaze of candles.[19] This way of visually evoking sacred history did not go unquestioned within the Greek

Christianisme occidental. Moyen Âge – Temps modernes, ed. Nicolas Balzamo, and Estelle Leutrat (Rennes, 2020), pp. 131–48.

18   Maria Vassilaki, "Cretan Icon-Painting and the Council of Ferrara/Florence (1438/39)," *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* [Benaki Museum] 13–14 (2013/14), 115–27.

19   On these mystery plays, the staging of which has been tentatively attributed to Filippo Brunelleschi, see Irina Danilova, "La rappresentazione dell'Annunciazione nella chiesa della SS. Annunziata in Firenze, vista dall'Arcivescovo di Suzdal," in *Filippo Brunelleschi, la sua opera e il suo tempo*, ed. Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat, Franco Borsi, and Pina Ragionieri (Florence, 1980), pp. 173–76; Nerida Newbigin, *Feste d'Oltrarno: Plays in Churches in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (Florence, 1996), 1:60–63; Megan Holmes, *Fra Filippo Lippi. The Carmelite Painter* (New Haven/London, 1999), pp. 50–53; Kristin Phillips-Court, *The Perfect Genre. Drama and Painting in Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot, 2011), pp. 36–37. On their impact on the conciliar fathers, see Maria Pia Pagani, "Il 'perfido' protagonista: Isidoro di Kiev al concilio di Firenze del 1439," in *L'età di Kiev e la sua eredità nell'incontro con l'Occidente*, ed. Gabriele De Rosa, and Francesca Lomastro (Rome, 2003), pp. 157–80, esp. 162–68.

Church and was condemned by Simeon of Thessaloniki (*c.*1381–1429) as contradicting the Byzantine iconodulic doctrine.[20] Nevertheless, despite its controversial status, the performance made a strong impression on its viewers: it was described as a "wonderful and terrific show" by Abraham of Suzdal, whose travelogue is still considered the most detailed written evidence to survive on Renaissance mystery plays.[21]

The second strategy for fictively simulating life was also connected with a public display, albeit one in which the performative role was played not by actors but by self-moving statues. To use Horst Bredekamp's terminology, it corresponded to a "schematic image act," where the illusion of presence was achieved through the physical animation of inanimate objects.[22] This was the case, for example, with the mechanical clock embellishing the bell tower that dominated the central market square of Ferrara. This kind of monumental object, which was just the most recent outcome of a centuries-old fascination with automata, had grown very popular in Western Europe since the 14th century.[23] At the tolling of the hour, a three-dimensional image of an angel emerged from a door, sounded a trumpet, and returned through another door. People were astounded by the convincingness of this fiction: as stated by the anonymous Russian author of Archbishop Isidore of Kiev's travelogue, "one would say that [this angel] is really alive."[24]

20   Simeon of Thessaloniki, *Dialogus contra haereses*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–66), 155:112.

21   See the text in Andrey Popov, *Историко-литературный обзор древнерусских полемических сочинении против Латинян (XI–XV в.)* [Historical and Literary Review of Ancient Russian Polemical Writings against the Latins (11th-15th Centuries)] (Moscow, 1875), pp. 360–95, and *Acta Slavica Concilii Florentini: narrationes et documenta*, ed. Johannes Krajcar (Rome, 1976), pp. 112–21. See Juliana Dresvina, "The Unorthodox 'Itinerary' of an Orthodox Bishop: Abraham of Suzdal and His Travels," *Medieval Journal* 4 (2014), 91–127.

22   Horst Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts* (Berlin, 2010).

23   Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago/London, 1996), pp. 106–08 and passim; Gerhard Jaritz, "Medieval Mechanical Clocks," in *Time: Sense, Space, Structure*, ed. Nancy van Deusen, and Leonard Michael Koff (Leiden, 2016), pp. 212–30. For thoughtful remarks on medieval automata in general, see Ittai Weinryb, *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 152–70.

24   Anonymous Russian author, *Хождение на Флорентийский собор* [Travel to the Cathedral of Florence], ed. Pedro Bádenas de la Peña, and Angel Luís Encinas Moral, in "Anónimo ruso sobre el viaje de Isidoro de Kíev al Concilio de Florencia," *Erytheia* 35 (2014), 251–99, esp. 276. On Isidore of Kiev's biography and role in the Council of Florence, see Marios Philippides, and Walter K. Hanak, *Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390–1462. A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord, and Prelate* (London, 2018).

Figurative mimesis, whether in the medium of the plastic or pictorial arts, was acknowledged as another efficacious means to blur the distinction between visual appearance and material reality, as is most strikingly witnessed by the description, in Isidore's account, of the wax ex-votos that crowded the church of Santissima Annunziata:

> In that city is a miracle-working icon: a picture of the all-pure Mother of God. Before the image in its shrine are to be found 6,000 images, faithfully made of wax in the shape of people who were healed: if someone was wounded by an arrow, or deaf, or mute, or without hands, or if some eminent man came on horseback, they are shown that way in wax and stand as if alive: whether of advanced age or young, whether woman or maiden or infant, whatever they were wearing, or however their bodies were afflicted with illness, or however they were healed – it is shown right there in the figure.[25]

Images moulded in wax were, by and large, the most common type of ex-voto offering in the Latin Church. Traditionally, they were meant to materially surrogate individual votaries by means of analogical, synecdochical, or metonymic associations,[26] but, in 15th-century Florence, their function as *Ersatz* bodies came to be frequently enhanced by the mimetic rendering of facial features, the simulation of life-size dimensions, the display of visual elements carrying narrative or memorial qualities, and the practice of dressing the statues in real clothing. Relying on an often-quoted passage in the 1568 version of Vasari's *Life of Verrocchio*,[27] art historians have long suspected that physiognomic verism

---

25 *Travel to the Cathedral of Florence*, p. 280. Basing on the original text and the Spanish translation on p. 281, I have slightly modified the English version quoted in Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Labelling Images, Venerating Icons in Sylvester Syropoulos's World," in *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean. Themes and Problems in the Memoirs*, ed. Fotini Kondyli, Vera Andriopoulou, Eirini Panou, and Mary B. Cunningham (Abingdon, 2016), pp. 79–106, esp. 86. I am obliged to my colleague Jens Herlth (Fribourg) for his help with this text.

26 Susann Waldmann, *Die lebensgroße Wachsfigur: Eine Studie zur Funktion und Bedeutung der keroplastischen Porträtfigur vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1990); Michele Bacci, *"Pro remedio animae." Immagini sacre e pratiche devozionali in Italia centrale (secoli XIII e XIV)* (Pisa, 2000), pp. 175–201; Fabio Bisogni, "La scultura in cera nel Medioevo," *Iconographica* 1 (2002), 1–15; Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ex-voto : image, organe, temps* (Paris, 2006); Michele Bacci, "L'individu en tant que prototype dans les ex-voto médiévaux," *Degrés* 145–46 (2011), 1–14.

27 Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori: nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini, and Paola Barocchi (Florence, 1966–97), 3:544.

first emerged in the medium of wax sculpture, before being transmitted to other artistic practices in a sort of trans-medial process.[28] However, this view tends to downplay the specifically religious dynamics in which votive portraits were involved: regardless of their technical and material qualities, figurative images of the late Middle Ages increasingly came to exhibit individualized physiognomic features, inasmuch as these proved instrumental to ensuring and enhancing the recognizability of specific supplicants as penitents and beneficiaries of spiritual as well as material advantages.[29]

Nevertheless, physical presence was certainly emphasized by the wax medium. The fictive display of the gesture of self-dedication to the Virgin Mary, crystallized in three-dimensional replicas of the donor's outward, fleshy appearance, was expected not only to arouse in the viewer empathic amazement as well as admiration for the piety and noble status of the depicted but also to remind the local Servite friars of their engagement in the regular performance of privileged prayers and masses for their benefactors. Perceptively enough, Orthodox visitors to Florentine churches clearly acknowledged that the use of materials and stylistic strategies to create the illusion of lifelikeness was specifically associated with statues meant to manifest the intensity of an individual's act of submission to God (in keeping with the etymological meaning of the word *devotion*, from Latin *devovere*, 'to offer'). On the other hand, it is symptomatic that these naturalistic features were not recognized as markers of images addressing religious themes. This difference is clearly emphasized, in the account of Isidore's visit, by the expression доспеты вощаны в образ людей ('[figures] made of wax in the shape of people'), as opposed to the description of the venerated picture of Mary – a wall painting with the

---

28   On wax sculpture as a privileged medium for the development of a naturalistic approach to the human figure, see Aby Warburg, "Bildniskunst und florentinisches Bürgertum," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, new edition by Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers, and Ulrich Pfisterer (Berlin, 1998), 1:89–126, 1:340–52, and Julius von Schlosser, "Geschichte der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 29 (1910–11), 171–258, repr. as *Tote Blicke. Geschichte der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs*, ed. Thomas Medicus (Berlin, 1993). See Megan Holmes, "Ex-Votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult," in *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, ed. Michael Cole, and Rebecca Zorach (Aldershot, 2009), pp. 159–81; Roberta Panzanelli, "Compelling Presence: Wax Effigies in Renaissance Florence," in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli (Los Angeles, 2008), pp. 13–18.

29   Michele Bacci, *Investimenti per l'aldilà. Arte e raccomandazione dell'anima nel Medioevo* (Bari/Rome, 2003), pp. 155–201; idem, "Italian Ex-Votos and 'Pro Anima' Images in the Late Middle Ages," in *Ex Voto: Votive Giving Across Cultures*, ed. Ittai Weinryb (New York, 2016), pp. 76–105.

Annunciation – as an icon (икона) and thus as equal in dignity to an Orthodox religious image.

As far as we can judge from extant textual evidence, the Greek and Russian participants in the council were not scandalized, and were to some extent even pleased, by the sight of artworks and spectacles aimed at simulating living beings. If restricted to theatrical effects, automata, and votive portraits, the new Renaissance pursuit of the *naturale* could be easily perceived, by many if not by all, as unproblematic. The same held true for Western artworks displaying landscape views, which were praised in ekphrases by prominent members of the Byzantine political and intellectual elite, like Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos as well as the scholars John and Mark Evgenikos, despite the latter's anti-Unionist positions.[30] On the other hand, it can be assumed that the conciliar fathers would have been much less comfortable with images that treated sacred schemes in an optically deceptive way. Nevertheless, this specific aspect was never explicitly pointed out and was not on the council's agenda: even in Gregory Melissenos's often-quoted complaint, the images on view in Latin churches were criticized less for their style than for their iconographic idiosyncrasy and frequent lack of *tituli*, which hampered their immediate recognizability.[31]

The Orthodox delegation was responsible for at least one artistic initiative, the funerary monument of Patriarch Joseph II, which certainly does not reveal any special empathy towards the naturalistic achievements of Renaissance painting. Like Melissenos, the patriarch was a supporter of the Union. Nothing is known about his attitude towards Latin pictorial arts, but it is interesting to underscore that he was a relative of the painter Nikolaos Philanthropenos, who, at the beginning of the century, had established his atelier in Candia (Heraklion) in joint venture with the Venetian artist Nicolò Storlado, while also being active in Constantinople and Venice. A painted polyptych now in Boston, which stands out for its rendering of holy figures in a style combining

---

30   On such literary descriptions, see Demetrios Pallas, "Αἱ αἰσθητικαὶ ἰδέαι τῶν Βυζαντινῶν πρὸ τῆς Ἁλώσεως (1453)" [The Aesthetic Ideas of the Byzantine Before the Fall of Constantinople (1453)], Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν [Journal of the Society of Byzantine Studies] 34 (1965), 313–31; Tassos Tanoulas, "Θηβαῖς: Αυτή η πλευρά του παραδείσου" [Thebais: This Side of Paradise], Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 20 (1999), 317–34; Glenn Peers, "Manuel II Palaiologos's Ekphrasis on a Tapestry in the Louvre: Word over Image," *Revue des études byzantines* 61 (2003), 201–14.

31   Melissenos's statement is reported in Sylvester Syropoulos's *Memorial*, published in *Les 'Mémoires' du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople. Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)*, ed. Vitalien Laurent (Paris, 1971), p. 250. On the passage and its ambiguity, see Weyl Carr, "Labelling Images."

Palaiologan approaches with the Gothicizing manner of Lorenzo Veneziano, has been suspected to be a work by Philanthropenos's hand and thus to reveal his full conversancy – or that of early 15th-century Cretan artists in general – with different pictorial idioms, the blending of which was not really seen to be problematic.[32]

When Joseph II died in Florence on 10 June 1439, Emperor John VIII Palaiologos wanted him to be buried in the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella, and another relative, Georgios Philanthropenos, made arrangements to ensure the regular performance of masses and anniversaries for the sake of his soul.[33] Strikingly enough, the marble chapel (Fig. 5.2) erected in his honour, resembling an arcosolium, included sculpted ornaments that were fully in keeping with local Florentine practice, whereas his funerary portrait, as far as it can still be appreciated in its 16th-century repainting, was almost two-dimensional in character: shown in a perfectly frontal posture standing on a green ground, the subject wears episcopal insignia and is accompanied by a Latin epigram and a Greek inscription.

Scholars have largely described this solution as Byzantine in appearance, and, accordingly, it has been deemed to be the work of a Greek painter, even if this assumption seems at odds with the handling of certain details, such as the red, golden-embroidered cloth held open by two angels behind the dead prelate's back.[34] This motif, undoubtedly typical of Italian and particularly Tuscan religious imagery since the 14th century, had already been introduced into the repertory of contemporary Cretan painting, as evidenced by an icon

---

32   Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "A Fifteenth Century Byzantine Icon-Painter Working on Mosaics in Venice: Unpublished Documents," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), 265–72; Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "Ἔνθρονη Βρεφο-κρατοῦσα καὶ ἅγιοι. Σύνθετο ἔργο ἰταλοκρητικῆς τέχνης" [An Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints. A Unique Work of Italo-Cretan Art], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 17 (1993–94), 285–302; Maria Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, "*Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostram.* Τὸ ἐργαστήριο ἑνὸς βυζαντινοῦ καὶ ἑνὸς βενετοῦ ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη" [*Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostrum.* The Workshop of a Byzantine and a Venetian Painters on Crete], *Σύμμεικτα* [Miscellanea] 14 (2001), 292–300.

33   Alessandro Diana, "The Funerary Monument of Joseph II, Patriarch of Constantinople," *Benaki Museum* 13–14 (2013–14), 103–14, esp. 103; Alessandro Diana, "Intorno al monumento funebre del patriarca di Costantinopoli Giuseppe II in Santa Maria Novella," *Opera nomina historiae* 7 (2012), 155–92.

34   Antonio Muñoz, "Alcuni dipinti bizantini di Firenze," *Rivista d'arte* 6 (1909), 113–20; Hans Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg, 1970), pp. 93–94; Diana, "The Funerary Monument," p. 107; Aldo Galli and Neville Rowley, "Un vergiliato tra le sculture del Quattrocento," in *Santa Maria Novella. La Basilica e il Convento*, ed. Andrea De Marchi (Florence, 2016), 2:58–95, esp. 68–73.

FIGURE 5.2 Santa Maria Novella, Florence: *Funerary Portrait of Patriarch Joseph II*,
            mural painting, 1451
            PHOTO: MICHELE BACCI

of the Virgin Enthroned made for a Latin confraternity in Candia around 1450 and now in the National Gallery in Athens.[35]

Nevertheless, whoever painted this image was probably aware that he was giving shape to a quite idiosyncratic composition. Contemporary funerary monuments in Italy placed much emphasis on the temporary splitting of a person's unity into two parts in death, by simultaneously displaying the dead corpse as a *gisant* and the soul in the form of a living individual who kneels before the holy ones. This principle is best exemplified, a few steps away from Joseph II's tomb, in Masaccio's *Trinity* (*c.*1425–27), in which the beholder is invited to compare the skeleton lying on the sarcophagus lid with the two donors – a dead man and his widow – who manifest their self-dedication to God on the threshold between the simulated reality of the painted altar and the background space filled by the epiphany of divine presence.[36] Full-length, standing, isolated figures of deceased persons are never encountered in funerary contexts within Renaissance painting, being certainly much more in keeping with Byzantine conventions, where, nevertheless, the deceased is normally shown in three-quarter view and engaged in a supplicatory dialogue with Christ or the Virgin Mary.[37] The choice to represent the patriarch in a rigidly frontal posture and with a strongly two-dimensional effect was probably meant to convey a different message: in its awe-inspiring, icon-like appearance, the deceased prelate's portrait was meant to be seen as a visual embodiment of the apostolic authority of the Greek Church itself.

If we now return to tomb G of the Chora (see Fig. 5.1), we are apparently faced with an unresolvable conundrum. How might we account for the fact that, during approximately the same period, members of the Byzantine elite made such different choices with regard to the decoration of their funerary monuments, with an Italianate style simulated in Constantinople and a Byzantinizing one adopted in Florence? As comparison of the two paintings self-evidently indicates, the selection of forms was conditioned by multiple factors, such as the commemorated person's role in society, the specific

---

35   Michele Bacci, "Our Lady of Mercy along the Sea Routes of the Late Medieval Mediterranean," *Benaki Museum* 13–14 (2013–14), 145–60, esp. 155–56.

36   See most recently Giuseppe Giura, "La seconda età della pittura in Santa Maria Novella," in *Santa Maria Novella*, 2:96–153, esp. 98–108, with previous bibliography. Nothing is known about the identity of the represented donors, but it is likely that the promoter of the work was the widow, on whose initiative the painting was made for the sake of her husband's soul, as was rather usual in the late Middle Ages. The man's skeleton (rendered in such a way as to also introduce a hint at the location of Adam's skull at the foot of the Cross on Golgotha) is shown in its burial setting, included within the altar that was to be used for the performance of *pro anima* masses.

37   Diana, "The Funerary Monument," p. 108.

viewing context, the association of the burial site with devotional and liturgical practices for the benefit of the deceased's soul, and the distinctive dialogue each image was expected to establish with its beholder. There is scarce indication that the adoption of a Renaissance approach to the human figure would have suited the political agenda of the Unionist party: on the contrary, the latter's members seem to have been committed to promoting more traditional visual conventions. Meanwhile, the Greek-speaking world was already familiar with the Italian repertory of forms, such that early Cretan painters drew upon them as needed, especially in the case of artworks like small devotional panels and funerary paintings that were meant to serve as visual supports for the religious practices of laypeople. Already in the mid-14th century, prior to the creation of tomb G, another burial space in Constantinople made use of a Western-type composition: to embellish a private side-chapel in the Latin church of St Paul of the Dominicans (present-day Arap Camii), a local Greek painter incorporated a scene of the Coronation of the Virgin in which Mary was shown wearing a Gothicizing blue mantle over a white robe and veil, along with a fleur-de-lys crown.[38] One wonders whether, as was true in other Mediterranean contexts,[39] the spaces reserved for the commemoration of dead people, and thus associated with private patronage, were privileged sites for the adoption of non-canonical imagery, including lifelike portraiture.

Unlike the marble chapel in Santa Maria Novella, the burial structure housing the Chora fragment was not isolated and self-contained but rather belonged to a sequence of funerary monuments erected since the previous century in the southern parekklesion and the outer narthex. In Metochites's times, the latter space had been conceived of as an open portico; its arcades were later walled and transformed into arcosolia.[40] In this way, these liminal parts of the church came to be more directly associated with the performance of liturgical

38   Rafał Quirini-Popławski, *Sztuka kolonii genueńskich w basenie Morza Czarnago* (*1261–1475*) [Art of Genoese Colonies in the Black Sea Basin (1261–1475)] (Krakow, 2017), p. 151; Rafał Quirini-Popławski, "Greek Painters for the Dominicans or Trecento at the Bosphorus? Once Again about the Style and Iconography of the Wall Paintings in the Former Dominican Church of St. Paul in Pera," *Arts* 8 (2019), 131, DOI: 10.3390/arts8040131. Accessed 9 Feb 2022.

39   Exemplary are the ways in which similar strategies for the afterlife, and the structures associated with them, came to be trans-confessionally used by the different religious denominations in Famagusta during the 14th and 15th centuries: see Michele Bacci, "Patterns of Church Decoration in Famagusta (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)," in *Famagusta. Art and Architecture*, ed. Annemarie Weyl Carr (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 203–76.

40   Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul* (Washington, D.C., 1987), pp. 74–76.

activities for the spiritual benefit of dead individuals.[41] The exact dating of such tombs and the identification of their specific *ktetors* are still matters of debate: many scholars follow Paul A. Underwood's assumption that most of them were linked to relatives and close friends of Metochites,[42] whereas other interpretations have recently been proposed by Emanuel Moutafov, with emphasis on the role of the Asan (or Asanes) family,[43] and by Nicholas Melvani, who suggests that the erection of funerary monuments was more gradual and reflected the shifting patronal rights among different, though mutually interrelated, family groups. According to Melvani's reconstruction, the outer narthex can be better understood as a privileged burial space for members of a specific branch of the Raoul-Asan clan, who were connected to both the Palaiologoi and the Dermokaites.[44]

Tomb E, located in the southernmost arcade of the exonarthex, was the first to be erected and decorated, around the mid-14th century. The family character of the composition is evidenced by its display of a group portrait, including adults and children as well as laypersons and people wearing monastic habits, one of whom is identified as a nun named Athanasia. It is possible that, in keeping with Byzantine practice, some deceased people may have been represented doubly, once in religious and again in profane attire. The figures are shown as supplicants below a half-length image of the Virgin Mary, and the medallions enclosing monograms of the Palaiologoi, Asans, and Rauls clearly identify their role in Byzantine society.[45]

---

41   Robert G. Ousterhout, "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34 (1995), 63–76; Engin Akyürek, *Bizans'ta sanat ve ritüel* [Art and Ritual in Byzantium] (Istanbul, 1996), pp. 167–92; Robert G. Ousterhout, "Funeral Ritual in the Parekklesion of the Chora Church," in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden/Boston, 2001), pp. 89–106.

42   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:269–95; Brooks, *Commemoration*, pp. 289–312; eadem, "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium. The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat., ed. Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout (New York, 2004), pp. 23–31. See also Robert G. Ousterhout, *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons* (Nicosia, 2017).

43   Emanuel Moutafov, *Богородица вместилище на невместимото: човешки измерения на Палеологовото изкуство в Конвтантинопол* [Theotokos, Container of the Uncontainable: Human Dimensions of the Palaiologan Art in Constantinople] (Sofia, 2020), pp. 90–140.

44   Nicholas Melvani, "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40, esp. 1235.

45   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:280–88, whose identification of tomb E with that of Metochites's mother-in-law Irene Raoulaina Palaiologina is quite unlikely. See Brooks, *Commemoration*, pp. 301–04; Melvani, "The Last Century," pp. 1229–32. More broadly

FIGURE 5.3   Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul: *Funerary Group Portrait*, mural painting, second quarter of the 15th century
PHOTO: MICHELE BACCI

The remnants of another group portrait can be found nearby in tomb F (Fig. 5.3), where a woman, man, and child were once depicted.

The three figures, ostensibly a couple with their son, are characterized by their precious attire as lay aristocrats. The monograms embroidered on their clothing identify the woman as a member of the Dermokaites branch of the Asan family and the wife of a man from the Palaiologoi. It can be assumed that the two adults, seen in three-quarter view, were represented performing prayers for the sake of the soul of a deceased son, in front of a now-lost Marian image on the upper part of the wall. As recent scholarship has emphasized, Underwood's conjectural dating of the composition to the mid-14th century clashes with certain stylistic and historical clues. For example, whereas the volumetric rendering of some folds indicates an interest in visually evoking the three-dimensional presence of the figure, the golden embellishments on

on Byzantine double portraits, see Ursula Weißbrod, *"Hier liegt der Knecht Gottes …". Gräber in byzantinischen Kirchen und ihr Dekor (11. bis 15. Jahrhundert). Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Höhlenkirchen Kappadokiens* (Wiesbaden, 2003), pp. 130–34.

the man's red caftan feature patterns that strongly diverge from the Byzantine emblems on his mantle, corresponding instead to motifs that were widespread in Italian textiles from around the middle of the 15th century.[46]

In his investigation of trans-Mediterranean silk routes in the late Middle Ages, David Jacoby was the first to point out such clothing details, namely, as visual evidence of the pervasiveness of high-quality, foreign textiles in 14th- and 15th-century Constantinople.[47] Extant sources indicate not so much that Byzantine elites had any special interest in contemporary Western fashion (indeed, few pieces of clothing were directly modelled on schemes used in Italy or France),[48] but rather that they shared in a trans-national and trans-religious understanding of such luxury fabrics as symbols of social prominence and prestige. This is confirmed by the discovery in Mystras of a tunic used for the burial of a 15th-century Byzantine princess, made of elaborately patterned silk probably originating from Venice.[49] Apparently, the traumatic events of 1453 did not hamper, but in fact further amplified, appreciation of such luxury materials: it is known that Italian, and especially Venetian, velvets and damasks enjoyed great success at the Ottoman court,[50] coming quickly to be appropriated also by the Orthodox Church elites for the making of liturgical

46   Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, 1:288–92; Brooks, *Commemoration*, pp. 304–06; Melvani, "The Last Century," pp. 1232–33.

47   David Jacoby, "The Silk Trade of Late Byzantine Constantinople," in *550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University. International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (xvth Century), 30–31 May 2003*, ed. Sümer Atasoy (Istanbul, 2004), pp. 129–44, esp. 139–40; David Jacoby, "Late Byzantium between the Mediterranean and Asia: Trade and Material Culture," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557). Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, ed. Sarah T. Brooks (New Haven, 2006), pp. 20–41, esp. 29.

48   Maria Parani, "Encounters in the Realm of Dress: Attitudes towards Western Styles in the Greek East," in *Renaissance Encounters. Greek East and Latin West*, ed. Marina S. Brownlee, and Dimitri H. Gondicas (Leiden/Boston, 2013), pp. 263–302.

49   Marielle Martiniani-Reber, "Identification des tissus archéologiques de Mystra: origine et datation," in *Parure d'une princesse byzantine. Tissus archéologiques de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra*, ed. Marielle Martiniani-Reber (Geneva, 2000), pp. 87–93.

50   See, among others, Giovanni Curatola, "Tessuti e artigianato turco nel mercato veneziano," in *Venezia e i Turchi: scontri e confronti di due civiltà* (Milan, 1985), pp. 186–95; Louise W. Mackie, "Italian Silks for the Ottoman Sultans," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 4/31 (2001), 1–21, https://web.archive.org/web/20041105051714fw_/http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis /anpt/ejos/EJOS-IV.o.htm. Accessed 7 Feb 2022; eadem, "Ottoman Kaftans with an Italian Identity," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, and Christoph Neumann (Istanbul, 2004), pp. 219–29; Anna Contadini, "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, ed. Anna Contadini, and Claire Norton (Farnham, 2013), pp. 23–61.

garments.[51] As a paradigm of excellence, these fabrics were also frequently reproduced in post-Byzantine painted decor, as attributes of religious figures.[52]

The silks produced in 15th-century Italy made use of two main patterns: the *griccia*, in which the arrangement evokes flowers and branches, springing out of a central, sinuous trunk, and the *cammino*, characterized by symmetric rows of multi-lobed panels housing pomegranates, thistle flowers, and cones.[53] The motif seen on the man's vermilion caftan in tomb F can be easily recognized as one such *cammino*, with pomegranates surrounded by geometrically rendered foliage within eight-lobed panels. Not dissimilar is a variant encountered on the lay supplicant's charcoal robe in tomb G: the specific way in which the ornament is structured on the fabric is of the 'grid-like' (*a inferriata*) type described by some 19th-century scholars.[54] In keeping with this model, the multi-lobed ogees are aligned with slanting parallels separated by foliage, and they house clusters of pomegranates surrounded by branches of lanceolate leaves, the lowest of which is bound with a tie or ring. Such solutions, which would be developed in much more complicated designs during the second half of the Quattrocento, are typical of brocaded velvets (*zetanini avvellutati*) produced in the Venetian lagoon around 1450 (Fig. 5.4).[55]

51   Nikolaos Vryzidis and Elena Papastavrou, "Italian and Ottoman Textiles in Greek Sacristies: Parallels and Fusions," in *15th International Congress of Turkish Art. Proceedings*, ed. Michele Bernardini, and Alessandro Taddei (Ankara, 2018), pp. 677–87.

52   Marielle Martiniani-Reber, "Tessuti veneziani nella pittura bizantina: un esempio della loro diffusione nei territori greci dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli," in *Il contributo veneziano nella formazione del gusto dei Greci (XV–XVII sec.)*, ed. Chrysa A. Maltezou (Venice, 2001), pp. 165–77; Christos D. Merantzas, "Le tissu de soie comme représentation culturelle: le cas de la peinture monumentale post-byzantine dans la Grèce du Nord," *Bulletin du Centre international d'etude des textiles anciens* 83 (2006), 6–21.

53   This terminology is first encountered in the 1487 Florentine *Treatise on Silk Manufacture*, see *L'arte della seta in Firenze. Trattato del secolo XV pubblicato per la prima volta, e Dialoghi*, ed. Girolamo Gargiolli (Florence, 1868), pp. 90–91. See Alessandra Geromel Pauletti, "'Veludi altobassi doro e darzento de ogni sorte'. Velluti veneziani del XV secolo," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, ed. Laura Dal Prà, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri (Trento, 2019), pp. 96–103.

54   On this definition, see Renata Pompas, *Textile Design: ricerca, elaborazione, progetto* (Milan, 1994), p. 126.

55   Some notable comparanda, all dating from *c.*1450, include: a blue-velvet fragmentary chasuble in the Bargello Museum in Florence, see Paolo Peri, "8. Parte di pianeta di velluto," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta*, pp. 195–96; a vermilion chasuble in the parish church of Azzone, near Bergamo, see Viviana Troncatti, "23. Pianeta," ibid., pp. 227–29; a blue-velvet panel in Palazzo Mocenigo, Venice, see Alessandra Geromel Pauletti, "52. Pannello di velluto," ibid., pp. 287–88; a vermilion-velvet chasuble in the parish church of Sant'Anna d'Alfaedo near Verona, see Alessandra Geromel Pauletti, "70. Pianeta," ibid., pp. 334–37. The slanting parallels are no longer encountered in the second half of the 15th century.

Much more than in tomb F, the richly decorated caftan in tomb G (see Fig. 5.1) is assigned a strong visual prominence. The deceased man, who is being received in paradise as he stands in front of the enthroned Virgin and Child, parades the precious Italian textile that signposts his belonging to Constantinople's elite. Given the location of the tomb in the outer narthex, it can be assumed that he was a member of the Asan-Dermokaites clan, but, unlike all the other funerary images at the Chora, he alone is represented in the immediate presence of the Queen and King of Heaven. Whereas the adjacent group portraits place emphasis on the uninterrupted bond of kinship between the dead and living members of the same family, the last painting in the chronological sequence stages an individual soul's encounter with God, without the mediation even of heavenly intercessors. Although images of saints may have been originally displayed on the side walls of the arcaded recess or the intrados of the arch, they were not directly integrated into the composition. Furthermore, the sacred figures and the supplicant not only share the same space but also the same scale, and they are ostensibly shown turned towards each other to emphasize their mutual interaction. Their physical presence is simulated in a similar, though not identical, way: whereas the commemorated person is given a solid appearance, enhanced by the tubular, parallel folds of his robe, Mary's body is much less naturalistically evoked by the disproportionate gatherings of the *maphorion* wrapping her legs. Such voluminous folds, highlighted in white, are reminiscent of Gothicizing, rather than Renaissance, solutions that had already been employed in early 15th-century Cretan icons.[56] Additionally, the throne and the suppedaneum do not exactly follow the laws of linear perspective, and one wonders whether this reflects the artist's deliberate choice to differentiate the human from the divine sphere.

In a way, the Chora painting looks much more daring than any contemporary votive or *pro anima* image from either Eastern or Western Europe. In the Byzantine sphere, some examples are known of funerary paintings displaying

---

On the pomegranate pattern, its origins, and symbolism, see Rosalia Bonito Fanelli, "The Pomegranate Pattern in Italian Renaissance Textiles: Origins and Influence," in *Contact, Crossover, Continuity: Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America* (Los Angeles, 1995), pp. 193–204.

56   A notable example is an icon of St Nicholas enthroned (*c.*1400) now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, which was frequently reproduced in post-Byzantine painting: see esp. Maria Vassilaki, "Μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα του αγίου Νικολάου" [A Post-Byzantine Icon of Saint Nicholas], in *Αντίφωνον. Αφιέρωμα στον καθηγητή Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη* [Antiphonon. Studies in Honour of Prof. N.V. Drandaki] (Thessaloniki, 1994), pp. 229–45; Anastasia Drandaki, *Greek Icons, 14th-18th Century. The Rena Andreadis Collection* (Milan, 2002), pp. 52–59.

an individual standing face-to-face with the enthroned Virgin and Child.[57] In an icon from *c.*1360–70 preserved on the Croatian island of Korčula, both Mary and Jesus are rendered in three-quarter view with the aim of emphasizing their movement towards, and interaction with, an elegantly clad, young aristocratic lady, who is seeking visual contact with her heavenly protectors (Fig. 5.5).[58]

Similar compositions are encountered in the arcosolium of the Serbian nobleman Ostoja Rajaković (d. 1379) in the narthex of the church of the Peribleptos in Ohrid (present-day North Macedonia; Fig. 5.6),[59] as well as in a lunette-shaped icon that was lost in the 1934 fire at Megaspilaion Monastery, near Kalavryta in the Peloponnese, and may have originally been preserved in Constantinople (Fig. 5.7).

The Megaspilaion icon is of particular interest here, as it bears witness to the patronage of this image type by members of the same aristocratic clan that was responsible for the tombs in the outer narthex of Chora Church. As revealed by an epigram displayed on the upper portion of the panel, the deceased was an adolescent named Ioannes who could boast of his kinship with the Doukas, Angeloi, Laskaris, Palaiologoi, Raoul, Tornikes, Philanthropenoi, and Asans, as well as of his imperial descent, emphasized by the medallions with double-headed eagles embroidered on his mantle. He was represented in a perfectly orant posture in immediate proximity to Mary and Jesus, who were shown turning towards the deceased with gestures that manifested their intercession and blessing. As convincingly argued by Titos Papamastorakis, the youth's most probable identification is with John Asan, a brother of Irene

---

57   Titos Papamastorakis, "Ἐπιτύμβιες παραστάσεις κατά τη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο" [Burial Images in the Mid- to Late Byzantine Period], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 19/4 (1996–97), 285–304; Weißbrod, *"Hier liegt der Knecht Gottes',"* pp. 134–42; Katherine Marsengill, "Imperial and Aristocratic Funerary Panel Portraits in the Middle and Late Byzantine Periods," in *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and Its Decoration*, ed. Mark J. Johnson, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Amy Papalexandrou (Farnham, 2012), pp. 203–19, esp. 204.

58   Vojislav Djurić, "Vizantijske i italo-vizantijske starine u Dalmaciji I." [Byzantine and Italo-Byzantine Antiquities in Dalmatia], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji Dalmaciji* [Contributions to Art History in Dalmatia] 12 (1960), 123–45, esp. 135–44; Vojislav Djurić, *Icônes de Yougoslavie* (Belgrade, 1961), p. 111; Grgo Gamulin, *Bogorodica s djetetom u staroj umjetnosti Hrvatske* [The Virgin and Child in the Ancient Art of Croatia] (Zagreb, 1971), p. 149; Grgo Gamulin, "Italokrećani na našoj obali," [Italo-Cretans on our coasts] *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* [Contributions to Art History in Dalmatia] 16 (1966), 265–70; Papamastorakis, "Burial Images," p. 300.

59   Cvetan Grozdanov, *Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo od XIV vek* [Ohrid Wall Painting from the 14th Century] (Ohrid, 1980), pp. 153–54; Papamastorakis, "Burial Images," p. 288.

FIGURE 5.5 Confraternity of All Saints, Korčula (Croatia): *A Young Lady Standing before the Virgin and Child Enthroned,* icon, *c.*1360–70
PHOTO: MICHELE BACCI

FIGURE 5.6 Sveti Kliment/Panagia Peribleptos, Ohrid (North Macedonia), arcosolium:
*The Governor of Ohrid, Ostoja Rajaković, Standing before the Virgin and Child
Enthroned*, mural painting, 1379
PHOTO: MICHELE BACCI

FIGURE 5.7 *Funerary Icon of Ioannes Asan, c.1350–54.* Formerly in Megaspilaion
Monastery, Kalavryta (Achaea, Greece); destroyed in 1934
PHOTO: TITOS PAPAMASTORAKIS "IOANNES 'REDOLENT
OF PERFUME' AND HIS ICON IN THE MEGA SPELAION
MONASTERY," *ZOGRAF* 26 (1997), FIG. 1

Asanina, wife of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, and, accordingly, the most probable dating of the icon is to *c*.1350–54.[60]

The aspiration of an individual (and his relatives) to partake of a privileged relationship with the Queen and King of Heaven in the hereafter was empha-sized visually through the proximity of his or her portrait to the holy ones. Physical closeness could be easily understood as both an auspicious metaphor for a longed-for salvation in the afterlife and an ostentatious manifestation of piety, which presupposed the family's, much more than the deceased's, unin-terrupted engagement in charity and other noble actions. The risk of exces-sively blurring the boundaries between the profane and sacred spheres was avoided by distinguishing the figures in terms of style (as in John Asan's flat, uniformly white face as opposed to the chiaroscuro modelling of Mary and Jesus), bodily proportions, and/or the visual prominence ascribed to exuber-antly decorated and eye-catching vestments.

The mural painting in tomb G conforms to the image type encountered in the above-mentioned Byzantine examples, but it differs from them in render-ing both the human and otherworldly agents of the devotional dialogue within the same optically simulated, three-dimensional, and solid space. Its more naturalistic approach is, indeed, the only aspect to suggest, whether rightly or not, a similarity with Renaissance arts of Western Europe. Its typological, compositional, and iconographic features reveal no specific connections to individual portraiture in contemporary Western arts. As much as late medie-val religious painting saw an unrestrainable intrusion of individual portraits, and though gradually the tendency diminished to differentiate donors from the addressees of their prayers via scale, commemorated people were none-theless regularly not depicted standing but rather in a kneeling and supplicat-ing posture, accompanied by one or more accompanying intercessors. Indeed, the staging of an individual's unmediated and isolated encounter with Mary was rather rare. Such compositions appeared sporadically in manuscript illu-minations meant for private devotion, such as in Books of Hours, but were normally avoided in the decoration of chapels and other altars associated with the performance of liturgical activities for the sake of the souls of individual donors, who were interested in visualizing their connection with otherworldly advocates and patrons.[61]

60   Titos Papamastorakis, "Ioannes 'Redolent of Perfume' and His Icon in the Mega Spelaion Monastery," *Zograf* 26 (1997), 65–74.

61   The best overview of such developments is found in Rosa Alcoy, *Anticipaciones del Paraíso. El donante y la migración del sentido en el Occidente medieval* (Vitoria/Gasteiz, 2017).

FIGURE 5.8 Jan van Eyck, *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin*, oil on panel, *c.*1435. Musée du Louvre, Paris

A notable exception is Jan van Eyck's famous *Rolin Madonna* (1435) in the Louvre, which quite unusually displays its donor, the chancellor of Burgundy Nicolas Rolin, kneeling on a prie-dieu while facing the Virgin Mary within a perspectively rendered, open loggia (Fig. 5.8).

Originally meant to be the centre of the pictorial programme for the chapel erected by Rolin for the benefit of his soul, in the church of Nôtre-Dame du Châtel in Autun, it showcases the donor's social and political dignity by accentuating the precious fabric of his robe, embellished with golden, *griccia*-like ornamentation. At the same time, it expresses his wish for salvation in the afterlife in terms of physical proximity to the holy. Contrary to earlier

interpretations of this odd solution as a manifestation of unbounded ego-centrism, recent studies indicate that the visual emphasis on the individual encounter with the holy figures aimed rather to convince the chancellor's contemporaries, and probably also himself, that his non-aristocratic origins did not prevent him from behaving, and manifesting his piety, like a real nobleman.[62]

Comparison of this work to the composition in tomb G can be instructive and may, for example, help us overcome the lingering art-historical obsession with the taxonomic definition of Eastern versus Western. The images demonstrate both similarities and differences: they were meant for different beholders and different viewing contexts, but they both visualized an individual nobleman's aspiration that his merits be deemed – by God but also by fellow humans – great enough to ensure his salvation in the hereafter. They also conveyed the belief that supplicants belonging to the highest social and political elites – whose privileged status was signposted in the images by the display of precious fabrics in widely appreciated Italianate styles – were much more easily exposed to mortal sin and were, therefore, in much greater need of assistance in terms of commemorative prayers and liturgical activities. Viewed from this perspective, the adoption of a representational approach aimed at evoking the physical presence of a human being, in part by staging his or her individualized appearance, can hardly be understood as the simple outcome of a painter's fascination with visual cultures beyond Byzantium. It proves more useful to think of 'expressive modes' that, far from being mutually exclusive, could be alternated or combined. If the abstract, almost dematerialized rendering of Joseph II's portrait in his Florentine tomb contributed to efficaciously underscoring his role as an embodiment of the Church itself, the naturalistic images of Nicolas Rodin and the Chora layman emphasized – in much the same way as the wax statues in the Santissima Annunziata – the embodied nature of the depicted's sought-after, personal, and self-aware encounter with God.

---

62   See esp. the insightful articles by Laura D. Gelfand, "Surrogate Selves: The 'Rolin Madonna' and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus* 29 (2002), 119–38, and Laura D. Gelfand, "Piety, Nobility and Posterity: Wealth and the Ruin of Nicolas Rolin's Reputation," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 1/1 (2009), DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2009.1.1.3. Accessed 8 Feb 2022.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Acta Slavica Concilii Florentini: narrationes et documenta, edited by Johannes Krajcar. Rome, 1976.

Anonymous Russian author, *Хождение на Флорентийский собор,* [Travel to the Cathedral of Florence], edited by Pedro Bádenas de la Peña, and Angel Luís Encinas Moral, in "Anónimo ruso sobre el viaje de Isidoro de Kíev al Concilio de Florencia," *Erytheia* 35 (2014), 251–99.

L'arte della seta in Firenze. Trattato del secolo XV pubblicato per la prima volta, e Dialoghi, edited by Girolamo Gargiolli. Florence, 1868.

Sylvester Syropoulos. *Memorial*, edited by Vitalien Laurent, in *Les 'Mémoires' du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople. Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)*. Paris, 1971.

Simeon of Thessaloniki. *Dialogus contra haereses*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1844–66, 33–175.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori: nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, edited by Rosanna Bettarini, and Paola Barocchi. Florence, 1966–97.

Secondary Sources

Akyürek, Engin. *Bizans'ta sanat ve ritüel* [Art and Ritual in Byzantium]. Istanbul, 1996.

Akyürek, Engin. "Funeral Ritual in the Parekklesion of the Chora Church," in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, edited by Nevra Necipoğlu, pp. 89–106. Leiden/Boston, 2001.

Alcoy, Rosa. *Anticipaciones del Paraíso. El donante y la migración del sentido en el Occidente medieval*. Vitoria/Gasteiz, 2017.

Archontopoulos, Theodoros A., and Angeliki Katsioti. "Η ζωγραφική στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου από τον 11ο αιώνα μέχρι την κατάληψή της από τους Τούρκους (1522)," [Painting in the Medieval Town of Rhodes from the 11th Century to the Turkish Conquest (1522)], in *15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου* [15 Years of Conservation Works in the Medieval Town of Rhodes], pp. 454–65. Athens, 2007.

Archontopoulos, Theodoros A., and Angeliki Katsioti. *Ο ναός της Αγίας Αικατερίνης στην πόλη της Ρόδου και η ζωγραφική του ύστερου Μεσαίωνα στα Δωδεκάνησα (1309–1453)* [The Church of Saint Catherine in the Town of Rhodes and Late Medieval Painting in the Dodecanese (1309–1453)]. Rhodes/Athens, 2010.

Bacci, Michele. *"Pro remedio animae," Immagini sacre e pratiche devozionali in Italia centrale (secoli XIII e XIV)*. Pisa, 2000.

Bacci, Michele. *Investimenti per l'aldilà. Arte e raccomandazione dell'anima nel Medioevo*. Bari/Rome, 2003.

Bacci, Michele. "L'individu en tant que prototype dans les ex-voto médiévaux," *Degrés* 145–46 (2011), 1–14.

Bacci, Michele. "Our Lady of Mercy along the Sea Routes of the Late Medieval Mediterranean," *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* [Benaki Museum] 13–14 (2013–14), 145–60.

Bacci, Michele. "Patterns of Church Decoration in Famagusta (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)," in *Famagusta. Art and Architecture*, edited by Annemarie Weyl Carr, pp. 203–76. Turnhout, 2014.

Bacci, Michele. "Italian Ex-Votos and 'Pro Anima' Images in the Late Middle Ages," in *Ex Voto: Votive Giving Across Cultures*, edited by Ittai Weinryb, pp. 76–105. New York, 2016.

Bacci, Michele. "The Art of Lusignan Cyprus and the Christian East: Some Thoughts on Historiography and Methodology," in *The Art and Archaeology of Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus (1192–1571). Recent Research and New Discoveries*, edited by Michalis Olympios, and Maria Parani, pp. 21–42. Turnhout, 2019.

Bacci, Michele. "Images à la grecque et agentivité miraculeuse à l'époque moderne," in *L'image miraculeuse dans le Christianisme occidental. Moyen Âge – Temps modernes*, edited by Nicolas Balzamo, and Estelle Leutrat, pp. 131–48. Rennes, 2020.

Bacci, Michele. *Βένετο-βυζαντινές αλληλεπιδράσεις στη ζωγραφική των εικόνων (1280–1450)* [Veneto-Byzantine Interactions in Icon Painting (1280–1450)]. Athens, 2021.

Belting, Hans. *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft*. Heidelberg, 1970.

Bisogni, Fabio. "La scultura in cera nel Medioevo," *Iconographica* 1 (2002), 1–15.

Bonito Fanelli, Rosalia. "The Pomegranate Pattern in Italian Renaissance Textiles: Origins and Influence," in *Contact, Crossover, Continuity: Proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, September 22–24, 1994*, pp. 193–204. Los Angeles, 1995.

Bredekamp, Horst. *Theorie des Bildakts*. Berlin, 2010.

Brooks, Sarah T. *Commemoration of the Dead: Late Byzantine Tomb Decoration (Mid-Thirteenth to Mid-Fifteenth Centuries)*. PhD diss., New York University, 2002.

Brooks, Sarah T. "The History and Significance of Tomb Monuments at the Chora Monastery," in *Restoring Byzantium. The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exh. cat., edited by Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout, pp. 23–31. New York, 2004.

Christoforaki, Ioanna. "Η *τέχνη στην Κύπρο την εποχή του Μαχαιρά και του Βουστρωνίου*," [Art on Cyprus in the Times of Machaeras and Boustronios], in *Λεόντιος Μαχαιράς – Γεώργιος Βουστρώνιος. Δυο χρονικά της μεσαιωνικής Κύπρου* [Leontios Machaeras – Georgios Boustronios: Two Chronicles of Medieval Cyprus], edited by Loukia Loizou-Chatzigavriel, pp. 87–96. Nicosia, 1997.

Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, Maria. "A Fifteenth Century Byzantine Icon-Painter Working on Mosaics in Venice: Unpublished Documents," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), 265–72.

Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, Maria. "Ἔνθρονη Βρεφοκρατούσα καὶ ἅγιοι. Σύνθετο ἔργο ἰταλοκρητικῆς τέχνης," [An Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints. A Unique Work of Italo-Cretan Art], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 17 (1993–94), 285–302.

Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, Maria. "*Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostram.* Το εργαστήριο ενός βυζαντινού και ενός βενετού ζωγράφου στην Κρήτη," [*Conducere apothecam, in qua exercere artem nostram.* The Workshop of a Byzantine and a Venetian Painter on Crete], *Σύμμεικτα* 14 (2001), 292–300.

Contadini, Anna. "Sharing a Taste? Material Culture and Intellectual Curiosity around the Mediterranean, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Century," in *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World*, edited by Anna Contadini, and Claire Norton, pp. 23–61. Farnham, 2013.

Cormack, Robin, "... and the Word was God: Art and Orthodoxy in Late Byzantium," in *Byzantine Orthodoxies*, edited by Andrew Louth, and Augustine Casiday, pp. 111–20. Aldershot, 2006.

Cormack, Robin. "Η ζωγραφική των εικόνων στην Κωνσταντινούπολη γύρω στο 1400," [Icon Painting in Constantinople Around 1400], in *Χειρ Αγγέλου. Ένας ζωγράφος εικόνων στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη* [The Hand of Angelos. An Icon Painter in Venetian-Ruled Crete], edited by Maria Vassilaki, pp. 48–57. Athens, 2010.

Cormack, Robin. *Byzantine Art,* 2nd ed. Oxford, 2018.

Curatola, Giovanni. "Tessuti e artigianato turco nel mercato veneziano," in *Venezia e i Turchi: scontri e confronti di due civiltà*, pp. 186–95. Milan, 1985.

Dal Prà, Laura, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri, eds. *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*. Trento, 2019.

Danilova, Irina. "La rappresentazione dell'Annunciazione nella chiesa della SS. Annunziata in Firenze, vista dall'Arcivescovo di Suzdal," in *Filippo Brunelleschi, la sua opera e il suo tempo*, edited by Guglielmo De Angelis d'Ossat, Franco Borsi, and Pina Ragionieri, pp. 173–76. Florence, 1980.

De Marchi, Andrea, ed. *Santa Maria Novella. La Basilica e il Convento*, 2 vols. Florence, 2016.

Demus, Otto, "The Style of the Kariye Camii and Its Place in the Development of Palaeologan Art," in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background,* edited by Paul A. Underwood, pp. 107–160. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Diana, Alessandro. "Intorno al monumento funebre del patriarca di Costantinopoli Giuseppe II in Santa Maria Novella," *Opera Nomina Historiae* 7 (2012), 155–92.

Diana, Alessandro. "The Funerary Monument of Joseph II, Patriarch of Constantinople," *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* [Benaki Museum] 13–14 (2013–14), 103–14.

Didi-Huberman, Georges. *Ex-voto: image, organe, temps*. Paris, 2006.

Djurić, Vojislav. "Vizantijske i italo-vizantijske starine u Dalmaciji I." [Byzantine and Italo-Byzantine antiquities in Dalmatia], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* [Contributions to art history in Dalmatia] 12 (1960), 123–45.

Djurić, Vojislav. *Icônes de Yougoslavie*. Belgrade, 1961.

Dohrn-van Rossum, Gerhard. *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders*. Chicago/London, 1996.

Drandaki, Anastasia. *Greek Icons, 14th–18th Century. The Rena Andreadis Collection*, pp. 52–59. Milan, 2002.

Drandaki, Anastasia. "Between Byzantium and Venice: Icon Painting in Venetian Crete in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *The Origins of El Greco. Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, edited by Anastasia Drandaki. New York, 2009.

Drandaki, Anastasia. "Piety, Politics, and Art in Fifteenth-Century Venetian Crete," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 71 (2017), 367–406.

Dresvina, Juliana. "The Unorthodox 'Itinerary' of an Orthodox Bishop: Abraham of Suzdal and His Travels," *Medieval Journal* 4 (2014), 91–127.

Galli, Aldo and Rowley, Neville, "Un vergiliato tra le sculture del Quattrocento," in *Santa Maria Novella. La Basilica e il Convento*, edited by Andrea De Marchi, 2:58–95. Florence, 2016.

Gamulin, Grgo. "Italokrećani na našoj obali" [Italo-Cretans on Our Coasts], *Prilozi povijesti umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* [Contributions to Art History in Dalmatia] 16 (1966), 265–70.

Gamulin, Grgo. *Bogorodica s djetetom u staroj umjetnosti Hrvatske* [The Virgin and Child in the Ancient Art of Croatia]. Zagreb, 1971.

Gelfand, Laura D. "Surrogate Selves: The 'Rolin Madonna' and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus* 29 (2002), 119–38.

Gelfand, Laura D. "Piety, Nobility and Posterity: Wealth and the Ruin of Nicolas Rolin's Reputation," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 1/1 (2009).

Geromel Pauletti, Alessandra, "'Veludi altobassi doro e darzento de ogni sorte'. Velluti veneziani del XV secolo," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, edited by Laura Dal Prà, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri, pp. 96–103. Trento, 2019.

Geromel Pauletti, Alessandra, "52. Pannello di velluto," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, edited by Laura Dal Prà, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri, pp. 287–88. Trento, 2019.

Giura, Giuseppe, "La seconda età della pittura in Santa Maria Novella," in *Santa Maria Novella, La Basilica e il Convento*, edited by Andrea De Marchi, 2:96–153. Florence, 2016.

Gratziou, Olga. "*A la latina*. Ζωγράφοι εικόνων προσανατολισμένοι δυτικά" [Alla latina. Icon Painters with Western Orientation], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 33 (2012), 357–68.

Grozdanov, Cvetan. *Ohridskoto zidno slikarstvo od XIV vek* [Ohrid Wall Painting from the 14th Century], pp. 153–54. Ohrid, 1980.

Holmes, Megan. *Fra Filippo Lippi. The Carmelite Painter*, pp. 50–53. New Haven/London, 1999.

Holmes, Megan. "Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult," in *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, edited by Michael Cole, and Rebecca Zorach, pp. 159–81. Aldershot, 2009.

Jacoby, David. "The Silk Trade of Late Byzantine Constantinople," in *550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University. International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth Century), 30–31 May 2003*, edited by Sümer Atasoy, pp. 129–44. Istanbul, 2004.

Jacoby, David. "Late Byzantium between the Mediterranean and Asia: Trade and Material Culture," in *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557). Perspectives on Late Byzantine Art and Culture*, edited by Sarah T. Brooks, pp. 20–41. New Haven, 2006.

Jaritz, Gerhard. "Medieval Mechanical Clocks," in *Time: Sense, Space, Structure*, edited by Nancy van Deusen, and Leonard Michael Koff, pp. 212–30. Leiden, 2016.

Karahan, Anne. *Byzantine Holy Images – Transcendence and Immanence. The Theological Background of the Iconography and Aesthetics of the Chora Church*. Leuven, 2010.

Kollias, Elias E. *Η μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου* [The Medieval Town of Rhodes and the Palace of the Great Master]. Athens, 1994.

Kollias, Elias E. *Η μνημειακή εκλεκτική ζωγραφική στη Ρόδο στα τέλη του 15ου και στις αρχές του 16ου αιώνα* [Monumental Eclectic Painting in Rhodes at the End of the 15th and the Beginnings of the 16th Century]. Athens, 2000.

Lazarev, Viktor. *Storia della pittura bizantina*. Turin, 1967.

Mackie, Louise W. "Italian Silks for the Ottoman Sultans," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 4/31 (2001), 1–21. Available at https://web.archive.org/web/20041 105051714fw_/http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis/anpt/ejos/EJOS-IV.0.htm.

Mackie, Louise W. "Ottoman Kaftans with an Italian Identity," in *Ottoman Costumes: From Textile to Identity*, edited by Suraiya Faroqhi, and Christoph Neumann, pp. 219–29. Istanbul, 2004.

Mango, Cyril A. *Chora: The Scroll of Heaven*. Istanbul, 2000.

Marsengill, Katherine. "Imperial and Aristocratic Funerary Panel Portraits in the Middle and Late Byzantine Periods," in *Approaches to Byzantine Architecture and Its Decoration*, edited by Mark J. Johnson, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Amy Papalexandrou, pp. 203–19. Farnham, 2012.

Martiniani-Reber, Marielle. "Identification des tissus archéologiques de Mystra: origine et datation," in *Parure d'une princesse byzantine. Tissus archéologiques de Sainte-Sophie de Mistra*, edited by Marielle Martiniani-Reber, pp. 87–93. Geneva, 2000.

Martiniani-Reber, Marielle. "Tessuti veneziani nella pittura bizantina: un esempio della loro diffusione nei territori greci dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli," in *Il*

contributo veneziano nella formazione del gusto dei Greci (*xv–xvii sec.*), edited by Chrysa A. Maltezou, pp. 165–77. Venice, 2001.

Mathews, Thomas F., and Ernest J.W. Hawkins. "Notes on the Atik Mustafa Paşa Camii in Istanbul and Its Frescoes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 125–34.

Melvani, Nicholas. "The Last Century of the Chora Monastery: A New Look at the Tomb Monuments," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 114 (2021), 1219–40.

Merantzas, Christos D. "Le tissu de soie comme représentation culturelle: le cas de la peinture monumentale post-byzantine dans la Grèce du Nord," *Bulletin du Centre international d'etude des textiles anciens* 83 (2006), 6–21.

Moutafov, Emanuel. *Богородица вместилище на невместимото: човешки измерения на Палеологовото нзкуство в Конвтантинопол* [Theotokos, Container of the Uncontainable: Human Dimensions of the Palaiologan Art in Constantinople]. Sofia, 2020.

Muñoz, Antonio. "Alcuni dipinti bizantini di Firenze," *Rivista d'arte* 6 (1909), 113–20.

Newbigin, Nerida. *Feste d'Oltrarno: Plays in Churches in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. Florence, 1996.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul*. Washington, D.C., 1987.

Ousterhout, Robert G "Temporal Structuring in the Chora Parekklesion," *Gesta* 34 (1995), 63–76.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *The Art of the Kariye Camii*. Istanbul/London, 2002.

Ousterhout, Robert G. *Finding a Place in History: The Chora Monastery and Its Patrons*. Nicosia, 2017.

Pagani, Maria Pia. "Il 'perfido' protagonista: Isidoro di Kiev al concilio di Firenze del 1439," in *L'età di Kiev e la sua eredità nell'incontro con l'Occidente*, edited by Gabriele De Rosa, and Francesca Lomastro, pp. 157–80. Rome, 2003.

Pallas, Demetrios. "Αἱ αἰσθητικαὶ ἰδέαι τῶν Βυζαντινῶν πρὸ τῆς Ἁλώσεως (1453)" [The Aesthetic Ideas of the Byzantines Before the Fall of Constantinople (1453)], *Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* [Journal of the Society of Byzantine Studies] 34 (1965), 313–31.

Panzanelli, Roberta. "Compelling Presence: Wax Effigies in Renaissance Florence," in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, edited by Roberta Panzanelli, pp. 13–18. Los Angeles, 2008.

Papadaki-Oekland, Stella. "Δυτικότροπες τοιχογραφίες του 14ου αιώνα στην Κρήτη. Η άλλη όψη μιας αμφίδρομης σχέσης" [Western-like Mural Paintings of the 14th Century on Crete. The Other Side of a Mutual Relationship], in *Εὐφρόσυνον. Αφιέρωμα στον Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη* [Euphrosynon. Studies in Honour of Manolis Chatzidaki], 2:491–513. Athens, 1992.

Papamastorakis, Titos. "Επιτύμβιες παραστάσεις κατά τη μέση και ύστερη βυζαντινή περίοδο" [Burial Images in the Mid- to Late Byzantine Period], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς*

Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 19/4 (1996–97), 285–304.

Papamastorakis, Titos. "Ioannes 'Redolent of Perfume' and His Icon in the Mega Spelaion Monastery," *Zograf* 26 (1997), 65–74.

Parani, Maria. *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)*. Leiden, 2002.

Parani, Maria. "Encounters in the Realm of Dress: Attitudes towards Western Styles in the Greek East," in *Renaissance Encounters. Greek East and Latin West*, edited by Marina S. Brownlee, and Dimitri H. Gondicas, pp. 263–302. Leiden/Boston, 2013.

Pauletti, Geromel, "70. Pianeta," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, edited by Laura Dal Prà, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri, pp. 334–37. Trento, 2019.

Peers, Glenn. "Manuel II Palaiologos's Ekphrasis on a Tapestry in the Louvre: Word over Image," *Revue des études byzantines* 61 (2003), 201–14.

Peri, Paolo, "8. Parte di pianeta di velluto," in *Fili d'oro e dipinti di seta. Velluti e ricami tra Gotico e Rinascimento*, edited by Laura Dal Prà, Marina Carmignani, and Paolo Peri, pp. 195–96. Trento, 2019.

Philippides, Marios, and Walter K. Hanak. *Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390–1462. A Late Byzantine Scholar, Warlord, and Prelate*. London, 2018.

Phillips-Court, Kristin. *The Perfect Genre. Drama and Painting in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 36–37. Aldershot, 2011.

Pompas, Renata. *Textile Design: ricerca, elaborazione, progetto*. Milan, 1994.

Popov, Andrey. *Историко-литературный обзор древнерусских полемических сочинении против Латинян (XI–XV в.)* [Historical and Literary Review of Ancient Russian Polemical Writings against the Latins (11th–15th Centuries)]. Moscow, 1875.

Quirini-Popławski, Rafał. *Sztuka kolonii genueńskich w basenie Morza Czarnago (1261–1475)* [Art of Genoese Colonies in the Black Sea Basin (1261–1475)]. Krakow, 2017.

Quirini-Popławski, Rafał. "Greek Painters for the Dominicans or Trecento at the Bosphorus? Once Again about the Style and Iconography of the Wall Paintings in the Former Dominican Church of St. Paul in Pera," *Arts* 8 (2019).

Tanoulas, Tassos. "Θηβαΐς: Αυτή η πλευρά του παραδείσου" [Thebais: This Side of Paradise], *Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* [Quarterly of the Christian Archaeological Society] 20 (1999), 317–34.

Underwood, Paul. *The Kariye Djami,* 3 vols. London, 1966.

Underwood, Paul A., ed. *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, *Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and Its Intellectual Background*. Princeton, N.J., 1975.

Vapheiades, Konstantinos. *Ὑστέρη Βυζαντινή ζωγραφική. Χώρος και μορφή στην τέχνη της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, 1150–1450* [Late Byzantine Painting. Space and Form in the Art of Constantinople, 1150–1450]. Thessaloniki, 2021.

Vassilaki, Maria. "Western Influences on the Fourteenth-Century Art of Crete," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1982), 305–11.

Vassilaki, Maria. "Μεταβυζαντινή εικόνα του αγίου Νικολάου [A Post-Byzantine Icon of Saint Nicholas]," in *Αντίφωνον. Αφιέρωμα στον καθηγητή Ν. Β. Δρανδάκη* [Antiphonon. Studies in Honour of Prof. N.V. Drandaki], pp. 229–45. Thessaloniki, 1994.

Vassilaki, Maria. *The Painter Angelos and Icon-Painting in Venetian Crete*. Farnham, 2009.

Vassilaki, Maria. "Cretan Icon-Painting and the Council of Ferrara/Florence (1438/39)," *Μουσείο Μπενάκη* [Benaki Museum] 13–14 (2013–14), 115–27.

von Schlosser, Julius. "Geschichte der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 29 (1910–11), 171–258; repr. as *Tote Blicke. Geschichte der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs*, edited by Thomas Medicus. Berlin, 1993.

Vryzidis, Nikolaos, and Elena Papastavrou. "Italian and Ottoman Textiles in Greek Sacristies: Parallels and Fusions," in *15th International Congress of Turkish Art. Proceedings*, edited by Michele Bernardini, and Alessandro Taddei, pp. 677–87. Ankara, 2018.

Waldmann, Susann. *Die lebensgroße Wachsfigur: Eine Studie zur Funktion und Bedeutung der keroplastischen Porträtfigur vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*. Munich, 1990.

Warburg, Aby. "Bildniskunst und florentinisches Bürgertum," in Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften*, new edition by Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers, and Ulrich Pfisterer, 1:89–126, 1:340–52. Berlin, 1998.

Weinryb, Ittai. *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, 2016.

Weißbrod, Ursula. *"Hier liegt der Knecht Gottes …". Gräber in byzantinischen Kirchen und ihr Dekor (11. bis 15. Jahrhundert). Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Höhlenkirchen Kappadokiens*. Wiesbaden, 2003.

Weyl Carr, Annemarie. *Cyprus and the Devotional Arts of Byzantium in the Era of the Crusades*. Aldershot, 2005.

Weyl Carr, Annemarie. "Labelling Images, Venerating Icons in Sylvester Syropoulos's World," in *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean. Themes and Problems in the Memoirs*, edited by Fotini Kondyli, Vera Andriopoulou, Eirini Panou, and Mary B. Cunningham, pp. 79–106. Abingdon, 2016.

The Adjustment of Chora Monastery to Ottoman Use

M. Baha Tanman

In this paper, I will provide a brief overview of the 'Ottomanization' of Chora Monastery and its immediate surroundings using primary and secondary sources.[1] The church was converted into a mosque shortly before 1511 – the date reflected in the registry documents for the foundation – by the grand vizier Hadım (also known as Atîk) Ali Pasha (r. 1501–03, 1509–11). Attached to his waqf in the Çemberlitaş district of Constantinople,[2] the building is mentioned as 'Cami-i Küçük' (Small Mosque) in documents concerning the repair of three mosques of Ali Pasha that were destroyed in the earthquake of 1766.[3] As pointed out by Robert G. Ousterhout, apart from the Ottoman alterations to its western façade, as well as to the drums of its domes, the most striking change – though well adapted to the character of the monument, with its modest dimensions and its brickwork – was the replacement of the bell tower with a minaret (Fig. 6.1).[4]

After the building's transformation into a mosque, the mosaics and frescoes were covered with plaster, and several elements were incorporated into the prayer space (Fig. 6.2), namely, the mihrab, the wooden minbar (seen at right), and the wooden preaching pulpit (*vaaz kürsüsü*; seen at left).

---

1 Due to the restrictions of the pandemic, along with health issues, I could not complete a thorough analysis of the archival material on the restorations, which would surely clarify certain details concerning the changes to the plan, as well as the materials used during these undertakings.

2 Ömer Lûtfi Barkan and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* [Registers of the Istanbul Pious Foundations dated 953 (1546)] (Istanbul, 1970), pp. 67, 70.

3 Deniz Mazlum, *1766 İstanbul Depremi. Belgeler Işığında Yapı Onarımları* [The Earthquake of 1766 in Istanbul. Restorations of Buildings in the Light of Documents] (Istanbul, 2011), p. 165.

4 Robert G. Ousterhout, "The Kariye: A Brief Introduction to the Building," in *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental Personalities*, ed. Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2007), pp. 16–32, esp. 20.

FIGURE 6.1   View of Kariye Camii, Istanbul, from the west, end of the 19th century
PHOTO: SUNA AND İNAN KIRAÇ FOUNDATION PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

The preaching pulpit with its panels in the *kündekâri* technique seems to date from the 16th century, while the minbar with its painted decoration in the *edirnekâri* style must have been renewed in the first half of the 18th century. The mihrab is strikingly harmonious with the Byzantine fabric around it: its veneer, which seems to have been deliberately produced from the same marble that covers the lower part of the apse wall, creates the impression that this prayer niche belongs to the original church building. The Ottoman chandelier, heir to Byzantine *polycandelons*, reflects the so-called 'Ottoman Baroque style' that was widespread from the second quarter of the 18th century, with its curved details and garlands.[5]

The fact that the church was not transformed into a mosque just or even soon after the Ottoman conquest – like some others were – but rather at the

5   For the Ottoman Baroque, see Doğan Kuban, *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme* [An Essay on Turkish Baroque Architecture] (Istanbul, 1954); Ayda Arel, *Onsekizinci Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarisinde Batılılaşma Süreci* [The Westernization Process of Architecture in Istanbul during the Eighteenth Century] (Istanbul, 1975); Unver Rustem, *Ottoman Baroque: The Architectural Refashioning of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul* (Princeton, N.J., 2019).

FIGURE 6.2 Ottoman additions to the apse of the former church, 1937
PHOTO: OĞUZ TOPOĞLU

beginning of the 16th century can be explained perhaps by the institution's location outside the densely inhabited heart of Byzantine Constantinople. Thus, in parallel to the conversion, a Muslim neighbourhood (*mahalle*) was created around the monument. A photograph from the end of the 19th century, taken from the south-east, shows the Kariye surrounded by modest wooden houses, as well as vacant lots resulting from several fires (Fig. 6.3).

In the foreground, we see the small, post-Byzantine Greek Orthodox church of Panagia Uranon.[6] In the distance, land walls are visible along with the Tekfur Sarayı or Palace of the Porphyrogenitus.

Additionally, an insurance map by Jacques Pervititch dated July 1929 shows two Greek schools next to the church, probably one for boys and the other for girls (Fig. 6.4).

---

6   Zafer Karaca, *İstanbul'da Tanzimat Öncesi Rum Ortodoks Kiliseleri* [Greek Orthodox Churches of Istanbul before Tanzimat Period] (Istanbul, 2008), pp. 255–61. In the Pervititch map, the church's name is erroneously given as 'Kimisis tou Theotokos'.

This suggests that, east of Kariye Mosque, a Greek neighbourhood was juxtaposed to the Muslim district. Both the photograph and the map attest that the urban fabric changed little between the early Ottoman and early Republican periods.

Through sources, we can present a chronology of the changes made to the building and its surroundings:

– 1668: A fountain is constructed to the north-west of Kariye Mosque by a certain Mustafa Agha.[7]
– First half of the 18th century: The chief eunuch Hacı Beşir Agha (c.1655–1746) establishes a soup kitchen (*imaret*) and a primary school.
– 22 May 1766: An earthquake impacts Constantinople. Kariye Mosque is cited among the 'heavily' damaged buildings.[8] The building will be restored ten years later by the architect Ismail Halife,[9] at a cost of 1,340.50 kuruş.[10]

---

7   İbrahim Hilmi Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri* [Fountains of Istanbul] (Istanbul, 1943), 1:86; Affan Egemen, *İstanbul'un Çeşme ve* Sebilleri [Fountains and Sabils of Istanbul] (Istanbul, 1993), p. 625.

8   Mazlum, *1766 İstanbul Depremi*, p. 54, from Topkapı Palace Museum Archive D. 10129 and 9567.

9   Zarif Orgun, "Hassa Mimarları," *Arkitekt* 12 (1938), 333–42, esp. 337.

10   Mazlum, *1766 İstanbul Depremi*, p. 190.

FIGURE 6.4   Jacques Pervititch's insurance map, showing the urban fabric around Kariye
            Camii, Istanbul, 1929
            PHOTO: JACQUES PERVITITCH, SIGORTA HARITALARINDA İSTANBUL, REPR.
            IN *ISTANBUL IN THE INSURANCE MAPS OF JACQUES PERVITITCH*, ED. ZÜLAL
            KILIÇ, ISTANBUL 2000, P. 175

– 1784: The tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî, a companion of the Prophet (*sahabî*),
  is first cited in an archival document as 'The tomb of Hazret-i Abû Said
  al-Hudrî adjoining Kariye Mosque'.[11]

---

11   Atilla Çetin, "İstanbul'da Tekke, Zâviye ve Hânkahlar Hakkında 1199 (1784) Tarihli Önemli
     Bir Vesika," [An Important Document on the *Tekke*s, *Zâviye*s and *Hânkah*s of Istanbul
     dated 1199 (1784)], *Vakıflar Dergisi* [Journal of Pious Foundations] 13 (1981), 583–90,
     esp. 585.

– 30 July 1788: A tomb keeper (*türbedar*) is assigned to the tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî, buried within the madrasa of Kariye Mosque.[12]

– 29 March 1790: A tomb keeper is assigned from the waqf of Haseki Sultan for the tomb inside the madrasa, which is among the waqfs under the supervision of the chief eunuch (*bâbüssaade ağası*) and situated beside Kariye Mosque in Edirnekapı.[13]

– 1835–36: The tomb is restored under Mahmud II. In 1968, the artist Ahmet Süheyl Ünver relates that the tughra of Mahmud II (signed 'Hâşim') was once installed above the entrance and later preserved inside the mosque for some time before being restored to its original place.[14] Nowadays this tughra is lost, probably stolen.

– 10 May 1870: Mosaics are stolen from Kariye Mosque, and precautions taken to avoid further burglary.[15]

– 9 March 1874: The Ministry of Awqaf sends photographs of Kariye and Zeyrek Mosques to the Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople (RAIC).[16]

– 12 April 1874: Kostanti Efendi requests permission to copy the 'paintings' in the narthex ("son cemaat yeri") of Kariye Mosque.[17]

– 13 December 1874: The creation of drawings of Kariye and Zeyrek Mosques is funded by the RAIC, the School of Engineering (Hendesehane), and the municipality.[18]

  16 August 1875: The Kariye Mosque in Edirnekapı undergoes restoration.[19]

– Before 1889–90: A Naqshbandi *tekke* (a dervish lodge) is founded by Sheikh Seyyid Mehmed Ârif Efendi (d. 1906), the keeper of the tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî.

– 1889–90: The *tekke* of Abû Said al-Hudrî (around Edirnekapı, near Kariye Mosque) is cited in *Mecmua-i Tekâyâ* as one such institution that performs its rituals on Friday. The *tekke* was attached to the Naqshbandi Order, and its sheikh was Ârif Efendi.[20]

---

12   Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul (BOA), CE .. EV .., 412, 20897, 22 Shawwāl 1202.

13   BOA, CE .. EV .., 413, 20909, 12 Rajab 1204.

14   Süheyl Ünver, "Ebû Said el-Hudrî," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* [Istanbul Encyclopedia] 9 (1968), 4857–58.

15   BOA, HR.MKT, 684, 22, 8 Safar 1287.

16   BOA, HR.MKT, 823, 36, 20 Muḥarram 1291.

17   BOA, HR.MKT, 18, 42, 24 Safar 1291.

18   BOA, HR.MKT, 858, 86, 4 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1291.

19   BOA, İ .. DH .., 706, 49402, 14 Rajab 1292.

20   Bandırmalızade es-Seyyid Ahmed Münib Üsküdarî, *Mecmuâ-i Tekâyâ* (Istanbul, 1889–90), p. 3. See also Hakkı Göktürk, "Ebû Said el-Hudrî Tekkesi," [*Tekke* of Ebû Said

- 4 October 1890: The German architect Alexander Rüdell receives permission to take pictures of Kariye Mosque.[21]
- 3 October 1893: The Ministry of Awqaf demands a registry of expenses for the necessary repair of Kariye Mosque.[22]
- 12 October 1893: Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration.[23]
- 22 October 1893: Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration in accordance with a list of materials (*keşif defteri*) returned and attached.[24]
- 10 July 1894: An earthquake impacts Constantinople.[25]
- 5 April 1896: The Ministry of Awqaf restores the elements of Kariye Mosque that were damaged in the earthquake of 1894.[26]
- 5 May 1896: Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration.[27]
- 11 May 1896: The Ministry of Awqaf restores further elements of Kariye Mosque that were damaged in the earthquake of 1894.[28]
- 18 October 1899: A request is submitted to calculate the amount that was spent to renew the macadam road (leading from Edirnekapı Street to Kariye Mosque) and its environs in preparation for Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II's 1898 visit to the city.[29]
- 20 December 1899: The macadam road leading from Edirnekapı Street to Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration.[30]
- 21 February 1901: The undersecretary of the French Embassy visits Kariye Mosque, and French Jesuit disciples of Gedikpaşa visit Samatya.[31]
- 9 November 1901: The Greek ambassador visits Kariye Mosque, accompanied by someone from Germany.[32]
- 20 February 1902: Grand Vizier Said Pasha (1838–1914) permits Mabden Bavor, a private advisor (*müşavir-i has*) to the German state, and accompanying

---

el-Hudrî], *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* [Istanbul Encyclopedia] 9 (1968), 4858; M. Baha Tanman, "İstanbul'daki Sahâbe Türbelerinin ve Kabirlerinin Özellikleri" [Features of the Mausolea and Tombs of the Companions of the Prophet], in *Ashâb-ı Kirâm* [Venerable Companions of the Prophet], ed. Çiğdem Yazar (Istanbul, 2014), pp. 139–55, esp. 148.

21   BOA, MF.MKT.121,76, 19 Safar 1308.
22   BOA, ŞD.127, 17, 22 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1311.
23   BOA, BEO.298, 2278, 11 Rabīʾ al-Ākhir 1311.
24   BOA, İ..EV..5,1, 1 Rabīʾ al-Ākhir 1311.
25   Sema Küçükalioğlu Özkılıç, *1894 Depremi ve İstanbul* [The Erathquake of 1894 and Istanbul] (Istanbul, 2015).
26   BOA, ŞD.137, 54, 21 Shawwāl 1313.
27   BOA, İ..EV..13,12, 22 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1313.
28   BOA, BEO, 778, 58342, 28 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1313.
29   BOA DH.MKT.2258, 24, 12 Jumādá al-Ākhirah 1317.
30   BOA, İ..ŞE..12,22, 16 Shaʿbān 1317.
31   BOA, Y.PRK.ZB..26,72, 2 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1318.
32   BOA, Y.PRK.ZB..31.85, 27 Rajab 1319.

persons to take pictures of Hagia Sophia and the Kariye. Bavor was sent by
Kaiser Wilhelm II to check on the ongoing excavations in Baalbek.[33]

– 1903–06: Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration by Fedor Shmit from the
  RAIC.[34]
– 28 October 1906: Payment is made to rebuild the sidewalk (*kaldırım*) along
  the road leading to Kariye Mosque.[35]
– 31 October 1906: The expense for the sidewalk of the road leading to Kariye
  Mosque is liquidated.[36]
– 1922–23: The *tekke* is cited in *Esâmi-i Tekâyâ Defteri*, hand-copied by Ekrem
  Hakkı Ayverdi.[37]
– 1929: Kariye Mosque undergoes restoration by the Ministry of Awqaf.
– 1948: The mosque is converted into a museum.
– 1978: The fountain undergoes restoration by the Touring and Automobile
  Club of Turkey.

Among the structures added around the former church during the Ottoman
period, the madrasa, the soup kitchen, and the *tekke* have disappeared, but
the traces of the tomb have survived to this day. The plot on which the *tekke*
and the tomb were located was partially enclosed by walls on its eastern and
southern borders, the southern wall standing adjacent to the buttress behind
the apse. To the west, the plot was partially surrounded by Kariye Mosque and
by Kariye Türbesi Street, which curves at the corner of the mosque to extend
east. The north-west corner of the plot is still allocated to the tomb, a rectan-
gular sarcophagus surmounted by a cylindrical tombstone (*şahide*) displaying
an informative inscription (Fig. 6.5) reading, "Yâ Hû / Ashâb-ı kirâmdan / Ebû
Said el-Hudrî / Radyalahu anh / Hicret 46" (O Just He / Abû Said al-Hudrî /
Among the prominent companions of the Prophet / May Allah be pleased with
him / 46th year of Hijra).

The plot has three entrances. The one closest to Kariye Mosque probably
provided access to the tomb, while the other opening to the north served as
the entrance to the *tekke*. Several wooden buildings of different dimensions
can be detected on the Pervititch map (see Fig. 6.4). The single-storey building
just to the right of the western entrance and adjacent to the apse wall of the
Kariye could have been the residence of the sheikh (and his family, or *harem*),
who was at the same time the tomb keeper. The other buildings neighbouring

33   BOA, HR.TH..264,106, 12 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1319.
34   Ousterhout, "The Kariye," p. 21.
35   BOA, İ..ŞE..20,33:, 10 Ramaḍān 1324.
36   BOA, BEO, 2937, 220224, 13 Ramaḍān 1324.
37   Archive of the General Directorate of Foundations, Istanbul, R.1341/1922–23, no. 63; order:
      Naqshbandi; founder: Mehmed Ârif; location: Ayvansaray-Ebûsaidelhudrî.

FIGURE 6.5
Tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî, adjacent to
Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PHOTO: M. BAHA TANMAN

FIGURE 6.6   Northwest section of the enclosure wall, adjacent to Kariye Camii, Istanbul
                    PHOTO: M. BAHA TANMAN

the northern entrance probably hosted the units of the *tekke*. The third door
on the north-eastern part of the plot opened to the garden of the *harem*,
part of the three-wing residence of the sheikh and his family.

The western entrance of the *tekke* and its three large windows are aligned
on the ashlar wall that runs along the street (Fig. 6.6).

The window in the middle is arched, whereas the other two are rectangu-
lar. The wall is equipped with arches in the sections above these windows. All
three of them are crowned by inscriptions in thuluth script.

The inscription above the rightmost window leads with the Sentence of Tawheed (Fig. 6.7).

At the bottom, it states that this place is the tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî. The small compartment to the left of the bottom line gives the name of the calligrapher, Hıdır, who was the trustee (*mütevelli*) of the Haseki Sultan Foundation, along with the Hijri date 1177 (Gregorian 1763–64). The full inscription reads, "Fa'lemennehû Lâ ilâhe illallah. / Ashâb-ı kiramdan Ebû Said el-Hudrî radyallah / Tealâ anh hazretlerinin merkad-i şerifleridir – ketebehû Hıdır Mütevellî-i / Haseki Sultan 1177" (Know that there is no God but Allah. / This is the venerable tomb of Abû Said al-Hudrî, may Allah be pleased with him, / among the prominent companions of the Prophet – written by Hıdır, trustee of the Haseki Sultan [Foundation] 1177).

Above the middle window appears only the Sentence of Tawheed (Fig. 6.8).

The inscription above the leftmost window (Fig. 6.9) gives the Hijri date 1304 (Gregorian 1886–87).

In addition, it contains a short biography of Abû Said al-Hudrî, and the name of the founder of the lodge, along with the date of foundation, both appear on the bottom line, which is flanked by dervish headgear motifs. The full inscription reads:

FIGURE 6.8   Central window of the enclosure wall adjacent to Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PHOTO: M. BAHA TANMAN

FIGURE 6.9   Inscription above the leftmost window of the enclosure
wall adjacent to Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PHOTO: M. BAHA TANMAN

Ecille-i ashâb-ı kiramdan Hazret-i Ebû Said el-Hudrî ashâbından Mâlik ibn Sinan

Hazretlerinin mahdumlarıdır ve on beş yaşında iken Benî Mustalik gazâsına

teşrif etdi ve fem-i saadet peyğamberîden bin yüz yetmiş hadîs-i şerîf rivâyet buyurmuşdur.

Bânî-i în hankâh Şeyh Mehmed Ârifest sene 1304.

(Hadhrat Abû Said al-Hudrî from the select ones among the prominent companions of the Prophet is the son of Hadhrat Mâlik ibn Sinan, and the participated to the ghaza (holy war) of Benî Mustalik when he was fifteen and related one thousand hundred seventy hadiths from the blessed mouth of the Prophet. The founder of this sufî lodge [*hankâh*] is Mehmed Ârif year 1304.)

It is interesting to note that all Byzantine religious buildings that were reused by the Ottomans – with the exception of Hagia Sophia – were given two functions: that of a mosque and that of a *tekke*. The earliest example is the church of Panagia Kyriotissa, dedicated by Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) to the travelling Mevlevi dervishes under the name of 'Kalenderhane' shortly after the conquest. Under Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), the churches of Stoudios, St Andreas in Krisei, and Ss Sergios and Bakkhos became mosque-*tekke*s attached to the Halveti Order, being respectively renamed İmrahor, Koca Mustafa Pasha, and Küçük Ayasofya. The latter with its octagonal plan provided an ideal space for the circular ritual practiced by the Halvetis, called *devran* (Fig. 6.10).

Other mosque-*tekke*s are Fenarî İsa, Toklu Dede, Sancakdar Hayreddin, Zeyrek (Semercizade), and Kefevî.

Among these monuments, Kariye Mosque represents a slightly different case. Here, the prayer space did not incorporate the function of a *tekke*. Rather, the *tekke* stood immediately adjacent to the exterior of the mosque, forming an element of the complex that housed, among other units, a primary school, a madrasa, and a soup kitchen.

Hagia Sophia, by contrast, never assumed a proper mosque-*tekke* role. However, it was not completely spared from this mystical omnipresence either. For example, historically almost all preachers, called *Ayasofya kürsü şeyhi*, were prominent Sufi sheikhs. In addition, different Sufi orders had the right to

FIGURE 6.10   Ritual of the Halveti Order called "devran"
IGNATIUS MOURADGEA D'OHSSON, *TABLEAU GÉNÉRAL DE L'EMPIRE OTHOMAN, DIVISÉ EN DEUX PARTIES, DONT L'UNE COMPREND LA LÉGISLATION MAHOMÉTANE; L'AUTRE L'HISTOIRE DE L'EMPIRE OTHOMANE*, 3 VOLS (PARIS, 1790)

perform their rituals in Hagia Sophia during the holiest night of the Ramadān, the Night of Power (Kadir Gecesi).

Was this bifunctional reuse of the Byzantine churches, which corresponds to the exoteric and esoteric aspects of Muslim religious life, inspired by the mystical dimension of Eastern Christianity? By considering the rich Byzantine cultural legacy of the Ottoman world, this possibility emerges.

Archives

Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul
Archive of the General Directorate of Foundations, Istanbul

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Bandırmalızade es-Seyyid Ahmed Münib Üsküdarî. *Mecmuâ-i Tekâyâ*. Istanbul, 1889–90.

Secondary Sources

Arel, Ayda. *Onsekizinci Yüzyıl İstanbul Mimarisinde Batılılaşma Süreci* [The Western-ization Process of Architecture in Istanbul during the Eighteenth Century]. Istanbul, 1975.

Barkan, Ömer Lûtfi, and Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi. *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri 953 (1546) Tarihli* [Registers of the Istanbul Pious Foundations dated 953 (1546)]. Istanbul, 1970.

Çetin, Atilla. "İstanbul'da Tekke, Zâviye ve Hânkahlar Hakkında Hakkında 1199 (1784) Tarihli Önemli Bir Vesika" [An Important Document on the *Tekke*s, *Zâviye*s and *Hânkah*s of Istanbul dated 1199 (1784)], *Vakıflar Dergisi* [Journal of Pious Foundations] 13 (1981), 583–90.

Egemen, Affan. *İstanbul'un Çeşme ve Sebilleri* [Fountains and Sabils of Istanbul]. Istanbul, 1993.

Göktürk, Hakkı. "Ebû Said el-Hudrî Tekkesi" [*Tekke* of Ebû Said el-Hudrî], *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* [Istanbul Encyclopedia] 9 (1968), 4858.

Karaca, Zafer. *İstanbul'da Tanzimat Öncesi Rum Ortodoks Kiliseleri* [Greek Orthodox Churches of Istanbul before Tanzimat Period]. Istanbul, 2008.

Kuban, Doğan. *Türk Barok Mimarisi Hakkında Bir Deneme* [An Essay on Turkish Baroque Architecture]. Istanbul, 1954.

Mazlum, Deniz. *1766 İstanbul Depremi. Belgeler Işığında Yapı Onarımları* [The Earth-quake of 1766 in Istanbul. Restorations of Buildings in the Light of Documents]. Istanbul, 2011.

Orgun, Zarif. "Hassa Mimarları," *Arkitekt* 12 (1938), 333–42.

Ousterhout, Robert G. "The Kariye: A Brief Introduction to the Building," in *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental Personalities*, edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 16–32. Istanbul, 2007.

Özkılıç, Sema Küçükalioğlu. *1894 Depremi ve İstanbul* [The Earthquake of 1894 and Istanbul]. Istanbul 2015.

Rustem, Unver. *Ottoman Baroque: The Architectural Refashioning of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul*. Princeton, 2019.

Tanışık, İbrahim. *İstanbul Çeşmeleri* [Fountains of Istanbul]. vol. 1, *İstanbul Ciheti*. Istanbul, 1943.

Tanman, M. Baha. "İstanbul'daki Sahâbe Türbelerinin ve Kabirlerinin Özellikleri" [Features of the Mausolea and Tombs of the Companions of the Prophet], in *Ashâb-ı Kirâm* [Venerable Companions of the Prophet], edited by Çiğdem Yazar, pp. 139–55. Istanbul, 2014.

Ünver, Süheyl. "Ebû Said el-Hudrî," *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi* [Istanbul Encyclopedia] 9 (1968), 4857–58.

Dimitri Ismailovitch's Copies of the Mosaics and Frescoes at the Kariye Camii: on the Destiny of Byzantine Artistic Heritage in Istanbul

Nadia Podzemskaia

In memory of André Guillou

∵

In the preface to his 1966 book on the Kariye Camii, Paul A. Underwood refers to Theodor Schmitt's book, published by the Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople (RAIC) in 1906, as "the only previous work that deals systematically with the Kariye Camii, its history, its architecture, and the mosaics as they were to be seen at the time."[1] The Ukrainian artist Dimitri Ismailovitch's (1890, Satanov, Russian Empire -1976, Rio de Janeiro) copies of the mosaics and frescoes of the Kariye Camii, produced in the mid-1920s but not known until the last decade of the 20th century,[2] have opened a new chapter in this historiography: not only do they demonstrate continuity between the activities of the Byzantine Institute of America and those of the RAIC, they also make clear the immense contribution of émigrés from the Russian Empire in Constantinople to the history of Byzantine studies. Subsequent research on the establishment of the Byzantine Institute of America, including the role of Thomas Whittemore, has only added weight to this idea.[3]

---

1   Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami* (New York, 1966), p. VI. On the history of the RAIC, see Ekaterina Y. Basargina, *Russkij arkheologicheskij institut v Konstantinopole: Ocherki istorii* [The Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople: Historical Essays] (Saint Petersburg, 1999).

2   See Gerold I. Vzdornov, "Russkie khudozhniki i vizantijskoe iskusstvo v Konstantinopole" [Russian Artists and Byzantine Art in Constantinople], *Tvorchestvo* [Creation] 1 (1992), 30–33; Nadia Podzemskaia, "À propos des copies d'art byzantin à Istanbul: les artistes russes émigrés et l'Institut byzantin d'Amérique," *Histoire de l'art* 44 (1999), 123–40.

3   See Rémi Labrusse and Nadia Podzemskaia, "Naissance d'une vocation. Aux sources de la carrière byzantine de Thomas Whittemore," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 43–69; Natalia Teteriatnikov, "Thomas Whittemore, the Byzantine Institute of America, and the Kariye," in *Kariye*: *from Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental*

In the 1990s, the copies Ismailovitch had executed at the Kariye Camii were the only known portion of his artistic output. Study of the artist's archive, along with works representative of his larger creative career (kept in the Eduardo and Leonardo Mendes Cavalcanti Collection in Rio de Janeiro), allows us to consider the reception of the copies, both at the moment of their creation and their rediscovery, and raises the question of the attitude of Istanbul artists to their Byzantine heritage.

Ismailovitch was in Constantinople in 1919, and in the winter of 1919–20 he got to know the artist Alexis Gritchenko. In his book *Two Years in Constantinople* (1930; published in French), Gritchenko describes how Ismailovitch approached him while he was drawing and how, from there, they became friends. He relays that Ismailovitch gave up his job at a second-hand clothing shop to become an artist: "He was passionate about art, about Istanbul, and about Byzantine walls."[4] In fact, Ismailovitch had studied painting as a child, and in Kiev, where he lived at the time of the revolution, he had been accepted to the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and had begun exhibiting his work. But of course, he was only a novice compared to Gritchenko, who had first-hand knowledge of French modernism and had been an active participant in the heady artistic life of Moscow in the second half of the 1910s. Gritchenko was also a recognized expert on icons and the author of several books, among them *On the Relationship of Russian Painting to Byzantium and the West in the 13th-20th Centuries* (1913) and *The Russian Icon as an Art of Painting* (1917), both published in Russian.[5]

A teacher-student relationship developed between the two artists. In his French book, Gritchenko talks about how they would sketch the city together; they discussed each other's work as well as art more generally, with particular interest in facture.[6] They would meet with fellow Istanbul artists and with

---

Personalities, ed. Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2007), pp. 33–61; Holger A. Klein, "The Elusive Mr. Whittemore: The Early Years, 1871–1916," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], ed. idem, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul, 2011), pp. 467–80.

4   Alexis Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople. Journal d'un peintre* (Paris, 1930), p. 103.

5   On Gritchenko's painting, see Vita Susak, *Alexis Gritchenko: Dynamocolor* (Kyiv, 2017). See also the artist's books: Alexis Gritchenko, *O svyazyakh russkoj zhivopisi s Vizantiey i Zapadom XIII–XX vv., Mysli zhivopistsa* [Connections between Russian Painting, Byzantium, and the West in the XIII–XX Centuries: A Painter's Thoughts] (Moscow, 1913); idem, *Russkaya ikona kak iskusstvo zhivopisi* [The Russian Icon as an Art of Painting] (Moscow, 1917).

6   "'We were discussing, as ever, art and *facture*.' Helene Nikolaievna (Ismailovitch's wife) became angry: 'I'm fed up with your *facture*!' Mitya has gone crazy. He mumbles in the night: '*Facture, facture! …*' 'But wake up, darling, calm down!' 'She mocks me and accuses me of having left her Mitienka astray.'" Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople*, p. 280.

writers and intellectuals, including the painters Ibrahim Çalli and Namyk Bey and the poet Ruşen Eşref.

However, these two friends had fundamentally differing attitudes towards their stay in Constantinople. Gritchenko dreamed of a swift departure for Paris, while Ismailovitch, an active founder of the Union of Russian Painters in Constantinople (1922–23), was hugely enthusiastic about becoming a part of the city's artistic life.[7] Gritchenko turned down Ismailovitch's offer to teach at the Union's studio and to exhibit his Constantinople watercolours there.[8] Although Gritchenko continued to sell these paintings when the opportunity arose, he wanted to keep the core collection for display in Paris: they were to be his calling card in that new artistic environment, in which the Ukrainian artist sought to secure his rightful place.[9]

In March 1921, Gritchenko left for Greece and then France, while Ismailovitch stayed on in Istanbul, working energetically to put on the Union's exhibitions, while also organizing in the city at least three solo exhibitions of his own work.[10] In his role as 'exhibition organizer' he regularly interacted with supporters, including the American diplomats Foster Waterman Stearns and Gardiner Howland Shaw.[11] Ismailovitch also made connections with local

7   "The tireless Mitia organized an association of Russian and Turkish painters. He tries to connect"; "Mitia arrives joyful and restless as usual. He always wants to build up relations with the Turks." Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople*, pp. 174, 240. On the Union of Russian Painters in Constantinople, see Ekaterina Aygün, "Union of Russian Painters in Constantinople," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod .net/viewer.p/69/2949/object/5145–10440425. Accessed 15 Sept 2021.

8   Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople*, p. 174.

9   Of Gritchenko's works exhibited in Athens in summer 1921, Adamantios Adamantiou, the first director of the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, writes in his letter of recommendation to Charles Diehl: "He has a strong desire to go to Paris in order to organize an exhibition in young artistic circles. He has all his works, so he is selling only copies of his works and keeps the prototypes for museums in his home country." Quoted in Aysenur Güler and Vita Susak, *Alexis Gritchenko: The Constantinople Years* (Istanbul, 2020), p. 64. Note also the artist's exhibitions in Paris: 1921, Salon d'automne à Paris, *Œuvres de Constantinople, choisies par Fernand Léger*; 1922, Galerie Povolotsky, *Constantinople bleu et rose*; 1923, Galerie Paul Guillaume; 1928, Galerie Druet, *Constantinople. Peintures et aquarelles par Gritchenko.*

10   See Ekaterina Aygün, "Dimitri Ismailovitch," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2949/object/5138–10436644. Accessed 22 Sept 2021.

11   See Ekaterina Aygün, "Foster Waterman Stearns," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2949/object/5138-11017193. Accessed 15 Apr 2021.

representatives from the art world, which remained intact even after the disbanding of the Union, and became a well-known figure.[12]

The artist exhibited in Istanbul within two main genres, namely, urban landscape and still life. Noting his evident love for the 'Orient', the local press singled out his still lifes in particular, works in which colour and light effects were combined with stunning technical skill to convey texture:

> You completely forget that you are standing in front of a canvas and colours, and you feel the limpid transparency of glass, the softness of fabrics, of old Oriental carpets with rich colours.[13]

The critics all agreed that Ismailovitch's still lifes – simple, ascetic, without superficial prettiness or contrived aestheticism – were serious works of technical excellence. The style of these pieces was sometimes defined as 'idealistic realism', i.e. between illusion and reality,[14] but more often as a naturalism "on the border of sculpting in colour and planes, revealing in this young artist an extremely rare gift for embodying nature."[15]

The distinctive qualities of Ismailovitch's painterly skill, so vigorously displayed in his still lifes, were put to use in his reproduction of historical monuments: a genuine "spiritual exertion" for the artist.[16] An episode from Ismailovitch's early biography – recounted in his own words in an article published in the Parisian émigré magazine *Renaissance* to honour the 50th anniversary of his artistic journey – serves as a representative epigraph to his monument-focussed project. The artist recalls that during one of the battles of the First World War, in which he served at the headquarters for General Aleksei Brusilov's army, he was

12   See, for example, an undated clipping from the Russian-language *Evening Gazette* in Ismailovitch's archive within the Collection and Archive of Eduardo and Leonardo Mendes Cavalcanti, Rio de Janeiro (hereafter CAELMC), with an interview by Nazmi Zia Bey, Director of the School of Fine Arts. He declares his interest in contemporary art movements in Russia and in emigration and expresses his desire to better get to know Russian artists, stating that he knows and greatly appreciates the Constantinople-based artists Nikolai Kalmykov and Ismailovitch.

13   Anonymous, "L'exposition du peintre russe Ismailovitch," *Journal d'Orient*, Saturday, 5 April 1924. CAELMC.

14   "D.V. Ismailovitch," separate print from the almanac [Russians on Bosphorus] (undated). CAELMC.

15   A. B-in, "Constantinople: The Refraction of the East," *Rus'*, Wednesday, 7 July 1926. CAELMC.

16   Ibid.

enthralled by an ancient Ukrainian church: "Whatever happens, say I am wounded or even killed," he decided, "I will nevertheless make a drawing of this church!" Then his unit retreated, and when very soon after he found himself back in the same place, the church was no longer there.[17]

The function of painting to memorialize the artistic heritage of the past was one of the driving forces behind Ismailovitch's output during his seven years in Constantinople. As Gritchenko's successor, he took up the position of a connoisseur and defender of Byzantine cultural heritage. On the 7th of November 1922, the French-language newspaper in Istanbul, *Journal d'Orient*, published an article stating that the Russian artist had just found a Byzantine fresco, perfectly preserved in some of its parts, among the ruins of the small Kemankeş Mosque (also known as Odalar Camii or Odalar Mesjedi), which had burned down in the fire of 1919. Introducing himself to Halil Ethem Bey, Director of the Imperial Ottoman Museum, Ismailovitch told him about his discovery and begged him to take action to preserve this fresco, which remained exposed to the open air and at the mercy of the elements. Bey thanked the Russian artist for his communication and promised to take the necessary measures.[18]

This episode illustrates perfectly how Ismailovitch acted on his own initiative, with vigour and determination, to make museum professionals and the urban community aware of the urgent need to preserve the valuable frescoes, which the artist discovered more than ten years before the excavations by the Swiss archaeologist Paul Schazmann (1934/35). However, the turning point, as Ismailovitch himself confirmed, was the commission – which he received from Gardiner Howland Shaw – to produce copies of one of the Byzantine mosaics at the Kariye Camii. Much later, when the artist was based in Rio de Janeiro, he wrote to Jean-Gabriel Lemoine, the director of what is today the Museum of Fine Arts Bordeaux, admitting:

> This commission pointed me in the direction of Byzantine art, a subject on which I had previously gained an understanding with the extremely valuable guidance imparted to me by the painter Gritchenko.

---

17   Valeriy F. Salatko-Petritsche, "Vydayutschijsya russkij khudozhnik: K pyatidesyatiletiyu D.V. Izmajlovitcha" [An Outstanding Russian Artist: For the 50th Anniversary of Dimitri Ismailovich], *Vozrozhdenie* [La Renaissance] 197 (May 1968), 117–19, esp. 117.

18   Anonymous, "Découverte d'une fresque byzantine," *Journal d'Orient,* Tuesday, 7 November 1922. CAELMC. The next day, the same newspaper returned to this story with further details about the destroyed mosque. Anonymous, "Les fiançailles de la Vierge," *Journal d'Orient*, Wednesday, 8 November 1922. CAELMC.

> Once I had plunged into the study of Byzantine art, I decided to make a complete survey of the frescoes in the Kariye Camii chapel, as well as of other mosaics.
>
> It is important to note that the Imperial Russian Archaeological Institute had initiated a series of works in the survey, the first part of which had been published. These works were halted in 1912.
>
> This gave me the idea of continuing these works at my own risk. Thus, the works presented in my collection – which were made over a period of three years – form a definitive conclusion to the works of the Russian Archaeological Institute and will enable the publication of a second and final volume dedicated to the Kariye Camii.[19]

Here, it is no accident that Ismailovitch positions himself as the successor to the RAIC, which had closed at the very start of the First World War. In the early 1920s, resuming its activities was on the agenda, and in 1924 the Soviet scholars Mikhail Alpatov and Nikolay Brunov were sent to Constantinople with the task of "familiarizing themselves with the situation of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople, the destiny of which was an issue of keen interest for all academic institutions."[20] Although we have no direct evidence that they met with Ismailovitch, it is more than likely that they did. In the numerous reports on their mission, published in various journals, Alpatov and Brunov noted the catastrophic state of the Byzantine monuments, in particular the Kariye Camii as well as another monument with copying from which the artist was involved, the Odalar Camii. They tried to persuade the international academic community to unite around preservation efforts and to undertake a systematic study of the sites. In the summer of 1926, Ismailovitch met the scholar Victor Lazarev, who took an exceptional interest in his work in the Kariye Camii. A dialogue ensued, as evidenced by a letter from Lazarev – which has survived in Ismailovitch's personal archive – dated 22 November 1926 and bearing the stamp of the "Museum of Fine Arts, Volkhonka, 12, Moscow, USSR":

---

19   Letter of Izmailovitch to Lemoine in French, 24 June 1948. Archive of the Museum of Fine Arts Bordeaux.

20   Mikhail V. Alpatov and Nikolay I. Brunov, "Kratkiy ottchet o poezdke na Vostok" [A Short Account of a Trip to the East], *Vizaniyskiy vremennik* [The Byzantine Chronicle] 24 (1926), 57–62.

Dear Dimitri Vasilievich!

I am sending 12 photographs of Byzantine and Italian icons along with this letter. Since, with the exception of Our Lady of Vladimir, none of this material has yet been published, I beg you not to reproduce it anywhere in print.

I am very satisfied with the copy of the composition featuring the angel. In terms of definition of the form, it is undoubtedly a significant step forward in your research. I look forward to seeing the promised photographs of the original Kariye Camii frescoes and the Fethiye Camii mosaic, as well as the restored icon. When you leave for America, please let me know your new address – I would hate to lose contact with you.

In the near future I will let you know the names of the saints that you are interested in from the frescoes you have copied.

In the meantime, I shake you warmly by the hand, sincerely yours,

V. Lazarev.[21]

Related documents preserved in Lazarev's archives attest that the artist replied to the scholar after he had moved to Brazil. Among these materials is a photograph of Ismailovitch in front of his copy of the Virgin of the Deesis (Fig. 7.1).

Also kept in the archive is a catalogue of an exhibition of Ismailovitch's copies at the Victoria and Albert Museum, with a dedicatory signature dated 15 December 1928, as well as the manuscript of a report titled "On the Mosaics and Frescoes of Kariye Camii and the State of Conservation of Other Monuments of Byzantine Antiquity in Constantinople." A note at the end of the report reads "Constantinople, 1 March 1927," indicating that Ismailovitch wrote it on the very eve of his departure from Constantinople.

On 2 March, the artist and his wife left the city on the steamboat *Famaka*. En route to Washington, D.C., they stopped in Athens, where Ismailovitch had a short exhibition in rooms at the Hotel 'Splendid', by invitation of the Greek government. The report was to be presented by the artist while on his American tour. One can assume that various copies of it existed; the final part of the one that is preserved in Lazarev's archive is written on the official letterhead of the steamboat ("On board S. S. Vestris") by which Ismailovitch and his wife travelled from New York to Rio de Janeiro in the summer of 1927.

American diplomats organized exhibitions of Ismailovitch's work in the United States, namely, at the Gordon Dunthorne Gallery, in Washington, D.C., and at the Brooklyn Museum. While in Istanbul, Ismailovitch had not only

21   CAELMC.

FIGURE 7.1　Dimitri Ismailovitch in front of his copy of the Virgin of the Deesis mosaic located in the esonarthex of Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, 1926

PHOTO: MOSCOW, ARCHIVES VIKTOR LAZAREV, REPR. IN GEROLD VZDORNOV, "RUSSKIE KHUDOZHNIKI I VIZANTIJSKOE ISKUSSTVO V KONSTANTINOPOLE" [RUSSIAN ARTISTS AND BYZANTINE ART IN CONSTANTINOPLE], TVORCHESTVO [CREATION] (1992), P. 33

made contact with the aforementioned Gardiner Howland Shaw but also with Thomas Whittemore, who followed the progress of his work on the Kariye Camii copies with great interest. The concluding, and clearly the most intensive, stage of the work, executed in the summer and autumn of 1926, is documented in letters from the artist to Whittemore from August and December of that year, to which he attached photographs of the copies (nine in August and ten in December).[22]

In the report, Ismailovitch sums up his more than two years of work on the copies at the Kariye Camii (Figs. 7.2, 7.3).

He describes how he was able to put together a "Byzantine mosaicist's palette," composed of 36 colours, using pebbles gathered from the corridors and eaves of the mosque. His examination of the mosaics also allowed him to elaborate his theory as to why the mosaics of the outer narthex, which are not very high up, appeared paler than those of the inner narthex, positioned almost a metre higher. This difference, he argued, was due to the fact that the conversion of the church into a mosque at the end of the 15th century had been carried out in haste and fairly superficially, such that many of the compositions located in less accessible regions of the space remained intact, while the most visible lower areas of the mosaics were completely plastered over, becoming paler as a result.

In the final part of the report, Ismailovitch gives a general description of the derelict and insufficiently preserved state of Byzantine monuments. Noting the indifference of the Ministry of Awqaf, under whose jurisdiction the mosques had been placed, as well as the insufficient financial resources of the Museum of Antiquities, which was responsible for their preservation, he argues that the question of the preservation of Byzantine monuments should be raised "as a matter of urgency for international artistic and archaeological organizations." He considered his report to be a call to mobilize public opinion among the international community.

Ismailovitch's exhibitions in Athens, Washington, and New York in 1927 were intended to have the same effect. The artist was then invited to Brazil, where in the summer of that year he was given an exhibition at the American embassy in Rio de Janeiro. From Brazil, the works were sent to London and shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1928. The subsequent fate of the copies is unknown up until 1948, when we hear of them in the French city of Bordeaux. There, Jean-Gabriel Lemoine had been appointed by the French government

---

22   See the letters of Ismailovitch to Thomas Whittemore of 5 August and 23 December 1926, conserved in the Byzantine Library, Paris, and reproduced in Klein, Ousterhout, and Pitarakis, eds., *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore*.

FIGURE 7.2   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *St Demetrius*, copy of the fresco in Chora Church/Kariye
             Camii, Istanbul, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard by the artist, *c*.1926
             COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI,
             RIO DE JANEIRO

FIGURE 7.3   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *Isaiah's Prophecy: The Angel Drives the Assyrians from Jerusalem*, copy of the fresco in Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard by the artist, *c.*1926

COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI, RIO DE JANEIRO

to offer an expert opinion on the Constantinople paintings before issuing a permit to take them out of France. Lemoine offered Ismailovitch the opportunity to exhibit them at the city's Museum of Painting (now the Museum of Fine Arts Bordeaux) before they were to be sent to Brazil.[23]

In each of these exhibitions, the copies from the Kariye Camii were shown together with Ismailovitch's cityscape sketches depicting a wide variety of Byzantine monuments in Constantinople: St Theodore (Kilissi Mesjedi), St Theodosia (now known as Gül Camii or the Rose Mosque), St Mary Panachrantos (Fenarî İsa Camii), and Hagia Sophia, as well as the Odalar Mesjedi, Tekfur Sarayı (the Palace of the Porphyrogenitus), and Bodrum Camii (known under the Greek name of Myrelaion).

The London exhibition, which was the most thematically rigorous, also featured the 'palette of a Byzantine mosaicist', an item whose subsequent fate remains unknown.[24] Further exhibitions presented other works by Ismailovitch from the Constantinople period and assigned them a distinctive ethnographic-anthropological dimension, such as *Journey to Constantinople*, held in Bordeaux in October-November 1948. "We are presenting a voyage to Constantinople now, to the people of Bordeaux," wrote the director of the Museum in the preface to the small catalogue of the exhibition.[25] Along with Ismailovitch's works, photographic enlargements of the mosaics at Hagia Sophia were exhibited, having been lent by the Byzantine Institute of America, or more specifically by the Byzantine Library in Paris. Among Ismailovitch's works, in addition to the copies from the Kariye Camii, was a section dedicated to 'Ethnography. Turkish and Russian Objects and Characters'. It included still lifes of everyday Turkish tableware, views of Constantinople with its Byzantine and Muslim monuments, and works under the general title 'Ethnographic Studies', including portraits of ethnic 'characters' who inhabited Istanbul: 'Russian Artists', 'A Turk, an Arab', 'An Armenian, a Greek', and so on (Fig. 7.4).

Based on responses to Ismailovitch's work, Lemoine mounted another exhibition in Bordeaux, the title of which sounds like a kind of manifesto: *The Wonders of Constantinople: Byzantine Light and Art*. In the preface to the small catalogue booklet, the curator describes Constantinople as an Eastern city

---

23   When the copies arrived in Brazil, they were exhibited again, for example at the São Paulo Museum of Art in November 1952 and in Hamburg during the Christmas market season in 1966. See the materials in the CAELMC.

24   Lemoine warns Ismailovitch about its absence in a letter dated 12 April 1948 conserved in the CAELMC. On the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, see Muriel Clayton, ed., *Mosaics and Frescoes in Kahrié-Djami Constantinople Copied by Dmitri Ismailovitch*, exh. cat. (London, 1928).

25   Jean-Gabriel Lemoine, *Prestiges de Constantinople. La lumière et l'art byzantin*, exh. cat. (Bordeaux, 1948).

FIGURE 7.4   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *Portrait of a Turk*, oil on canvas glued on wood, 1920s
COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI,
RIO DE JANEIRO

with cultural origins in ancient Persia. In tracing Byzantine and Arabic art to
the remnants of ancient Persian civilization, he 'forgot', as was the custom at
the time, about the cultural heritage that was specifically Turkish.[26]

---

26   On the problem of the identification of Turkish and Persian art in Western representa-
tions in the 19th and 20th centuries, see Rémi Labrusse, "Théories de l'ornement et
'Renaissance orientale': un modèle ottoman pour le XIXᵉ siècle?" in *L'orientalisme, les*

Persian art, barely definable in more precise chronological or territorial terms than those employed by the French art historian, had also been one of the most important leitmotifs of Gritchenko's book *Two Years in Constantinople.* There, the artist notes his first discovery of Persian miniatures in the Evkaf-ı Islamiye Museum (now the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum),[27] to which he repeatedly returns, both on his own and accompanied by Turkish friends. With them, he discusses Eugène Delacroix and speculates about the influence of Persian art on Italian and Dutch visual cultures. He compares the Persian miniatures in the Museum with the mosaics in the Kariye Camii, "two exceptional places where the artist speaks to me in a revelatory language. They come from one source, Byzantium, and colour."[28]

Gritchenko's account of his visit with Ismailovitch to the home and studio of Namyk Bey[29] is of particular interest. He is struck by the contrast between the orientally furnished hall in his house – decorated with Turkish and Persian folk art, "wonderful, in shades of orange pink, coated with varnish" – and Bey's own portraits in the studio:

> In Turkish life, one can see a series of Byzantine characteristics, because it has, in its time, been completely saturated with the Orient. In these works, I see a third-rate Europe, an ugly Hun lacking any point of contact with Byzantium, with its powerful art – nor with the Orient – with its particular way of life, its wisdom, aspirations towards nature and contemplation, that are inaccessible to Europe.[30]

The striking contrast between the powerful Oriental tradition that permeated the whole of Turkish life and the imitations of third-rate European artists in the works of contemporary Turkish art reminded Gritchenko of the situation in Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. He attributes this similarity to the two cultures' common position "between East and West." Gritchenko told the artist Ibrahim Çalli:

---

orientalistes et l'Empire ottoman: de la fin du XVIIIᵉ siècle à la fin du XXᵉ siècle, ed. Huguette Meunier-Chuvin (Paris, 2011), pp. 145–72; Rémi Labrusse, "Modernité byzantine: l'exposition internationale d'art byzantin de 1931 à Paris," in *Le double voyage*: *Paris-Athènes (1919–1939)*, ed. Lucile Arnoux-Farnoux, and Polina Kosmadaki (Athens, 2018), pp. 221–42; Frédéric Hitzel and Mireille Jacotin, *Iznik. L'aventure d'une collection. Les céramiques ottomanes du Musée national de la Renaissance-Château d'Écouen* (Paris, 2005).

27   In that period, the museum was located in the imaret building of the Suleymaniye Mosque Social Complex.

28   Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople*, p. 265.

29   Ibid., pp. 164–65.

30   Ibid., p. 165.

> Yes, you resemble us Russians. Like us, you were situated between the Orient and Occident. You inherited Byzantine culture in your own way. Arabs and Persians are for you what Asia is for us.[31]

This possibility of cross-cultural dialogue was obvious to Gritchenko's Turkish friends, who replied: "Russians carry themselves quite differently from the Germans, the French, or the English. Your gestures, the way you sit, [all of it] is Oriental."[32]

However, in this question of attitudes towards a Byzantine heritage, the notion of a common 'position between East and West' was fraught, even potentially explosive. For Western European cultures, Byzantium was the East and was perceived, albeit reductively, as a civilization foreign to the West. Henri Matisse could admire 'Muslim art' at the Munich exhibition of 1910 and, in much the same way, the Russian icons he saw in Moscow.[33] In Orthodox countries, particularly in Greece and Russia, the question of icons and the Byzantine legacy was always emotionally charged, whereas in Turkey the attitude towards Byzantium was one of disacknowledgement.[34] It is no coincidence that Çalli – the artist who was influenced more than anyone else by Gritchenko's painting style – seems to have remained indifferent to the Byzantine subjects that figured in the work of his Ukrainian friend.[35]

The reaction of the Greek press to Ismailovitch's exhibition in Athens is telling. The newspaper *Eleutheron Vima* wrote about it on 8 March 1927:

---

31   Ibid., p. 179.

32   Ibid., p. 181.

33   On Matisse's notion of the East, see Rémi Labrusse, "Byzance et l'art moderne. La référence byzantine dans les cercles artistiques d'avant-garde au début du xxᵉ siècle," in *Présence de Byzance,* ed. Jean-Michel Spieser (Paris, 2007), pp. 55–89 and 150–73.

34   The process of integrating ancient and Byzantine archaeological treasures into the collections of Istanbul museums, which had already begun in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century, was slow and difficult. With the inception of the Turkish Republic, which challenged artists to develop a new patriotic iconography, this issue was neglected even further. See Wendy M.K. Shaw, *Possessors and Possesed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Calif., 2003); eadem, *Ottoman Painting: Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic* (London/New York, 2011).

35   The series of Çalli's drawings that was closest to Gritchenko's work concerned subjects of whirling dervishes and petition writers. See Güler and Susak, *Alexis Gritchenko: the Constantinople years*, pp. 160–63.

The works of Mr Ismailovitch constitute an extensive propaganda of
Greek art and artistic concepts among the European and American world,
and in this respect, we can only express our gratitude to the artist.[36]

And with more emphasis, the weekly magazine *Kiriaki*, reporting on 13 March
the failure of negotiations for the sale of several works between the director
of the National Gallery of Art, Zakharias Papandoníou, and the artist, noted:
"Nonetheless, the copies of the Chora ought to remain here."[37]

Ismailovitch's reverence towards Byzantine antiquity was intrinsic: his cre-
ation of the Kariye Camii copies was, as he himself admitted to Lemoine, a
continuation of the RAIC project initiated by the artist Nikolay Kluge, a few
of whose sketches and drawings, along with several photographs, were pub-
lished in the album appended to Schmitt's 1906 volume.[38] Ismailovitch's inher-
itance of the work of the RAIC meant that his reproductions formed part of
the Russian national archaeological tradition, an aspect amplified by the fact
that, in spite of all his efforts, they had not been properly appreciated by local
authorities and artists.[39] The collaboration with Kluge was a vital part of the
work of the RAIC, for his copies were much more precise than those that had
been published in 1878 by the Viennese architect Domenico Pulgher.[40] Pulgher
was the first to take measurements and make drawings of the Byzantine mon-
ument after the plaster had been removed from them in the 1860s, at the order
of Sultan Abdülaziz. His main interest was the architecture of the Kariye.

The first detailed analysis of the pictorial content of the mosaics, as Schmitt
points out,[41] was the work of one of the founders of the RAIC, Nikodim
Kondakov. This famous Russian academic visited Chora Monastery in 1880 and,
by the following year, had already published the initial results of his work in
a slim pamphlet, sensing the urgency to re-ascribe the mosaics to a Byzantine

---

36   CAELMC.

37   Ibid.

38   Nikolay K. Kluge, *Kariye-Djami. Al'bom k XI tomu Izvestij Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo
       Instituta v Konstantinopole* [Kariye-Djami. Album for Volume XI of the Bulletin of the
       Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople: Drawings and Sketches] (Munich,
       1906).

39   It should be noted that there is a pencil portrait of Mustafa Kemal by Ismailovitch in the
       CAELMC. It is dated 1926, during the period of his intensive production of copies from the
       Kariye Camii.

40   Domenico Pulgher, *Les anciennes églises byzantines de Constantinople, relevées, dessinées
       et publiées* (Vienne, 1878–80).

41   Theodor Schmitt, *Kahrié-Djami: Istoriya monastyrya Khory, arkhitektura mecheti, mozaiki
       narfiksov* [Kariye Camii: A History of the Chora Monastery, the Architecture of the
       Mosque, the Mosaics in the Narthexes] (Sofia, 1906), p. 51.

master – contrary to the prevailing theory of the time, which attributed them to a student of Giotto in the tradition of Duccio.[42] In the heat of this controversy, however, Kondakov overplayed his hand by arguing against dating the mosaics to the early 14th century, suggesting that the majority should be dated to the period from the 11th to the 13th centuries. For this, he was severely criticized by the French Byzantine scholars Gabriel Millet and Charles Diehl.[43] This criticism has overshadowed the fundamental, genuinely groundbreaking significance of his pamphlet.[44]

In this brochure from 1881, Kondakov published line drawings of the mosaics. He had made these using photographic images commissioned from the photographer Berggruen by an Englishman; the only copy of these photographs that was not put on sale had been donated by the patron to the library of the Greek Philological Society, where Kondakov was able to make use of them.[45] In 1884 Kondakov invited the watercolourist from Saint Petersburg, Emile Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, to work in Constantinople. A self-taught artist, he was influenced by the Italian-born Luigi Premazzi, the most important representative of the watercolour technique in 1870s Russia. The watercolour by Villiers that is reproduced in Kondakov's second publication on the Kariye Camii (1886),[46] as can be judged from its black-and-white reproduction, has a freer character than is typical of Orientalist *vedute*. Moreover, the painting's emphasis contrasts with that of Kondakov's line drawings, in which the interest of an iconographer is paramount.

Reference to black-and-white reproductions of the mosaics was considered problematic at the beginning of the 20th century, since although the mastery of colour displayed by Byzantine artists was most highly regarded, their drawing tended to be disparaged.[47] Gritchenko, who looked at the mosaics and

---

42   Nikodim P. Kondakov, *Mozaiki mecheti Kahrie-Djamisi Moni ths xwras v Konstantinopole* [Mosaics of the Kariye Camii Mosque Mone tes Choras in Constantinople] (Odessa, 1881).

43   Charles Diehl, "Les mosaïques de Kahrié-Djami," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1904–05; repr. in idem, *Études byzantines: introduction à l'histoire de Byzance* (Paris, 1905), p. 396.

44   Kondakov's pamphlet, writes Schmitt (idem, *Kariye Camii*, p. 51), took on a "merely strategic significance," in that Kondakov needed to demonstrate the true significance of the Kariye Camii mosaics for the history of art. However, Schmitt adds that no one, of course, understood better than the author himself the qualitative and quantitative insufficiency of the material he had to make use of.

45   Kondakov, *Mosaics of the Kariye Camii*, p. 4.

46   Nikodim P. Kondakov, *Vizantijskie tserkvi i pamyatniki Konstantinopolya* [The Byzantine Churches and Monuments of Constantinople] (Odessa, 1886).

47   Charles Diehl's quite characteristic explanation is as follows: "Certainly, as in almost all works of Byzantine art, the drawing is sometimes awkward, the anatomy often simplistic; that is why photography, by underlining these weaknesses, by erasing the magnificence of

FIGURE 7.5 Alexis Gritchenko, *Fragment of a Mosaic in the Kariye* (*Chora*) *Mosque*,
watercolour and pencil on paper, June 1920
COLLECTION OF GIZELLA LOPUSANSZKY AND ALEXANDER DEMKO,
NEW YORK

frescoes of Constantinople through the lens of the scholarly work of Diehl
and Millet,[48] as well as that of the most recent achievements of French and
Russian avant-garde painting, was particularly sensitive to colour in Byzantine
painting. His watercolours differ fundamentally from the genre of the archae-
ological copy, both the neoclassical type of the 19th century and the attempted
precision of Kluge's copies, as well as from the 19th-century orientalist *veduta*:
they are free of specific details and complex compositions, being built up
exclusively from a simplified colour dynamic (Fig. 7.5).

Ismailovitch's Constantinople watercolours, though not as powerful in their
approach to colour, show the same tendency (Figs. 7.6, 7.7).

the colour that conceals them in reality, cannot give a completely accurate idea of these
remarkable works." See idem, "Les mosaïques de Kahrié-Djami," p. 439.

48   Gritchenko, *Deux ans à Constantinople*, p. 189.

FIGURE 7.6   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *Untitled* [*Landscape of Constantinople*], watercolour and
pencil on paper, 1920s
COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI, RIO DE
JANEIRO

The freedom of colour Gritchenko achieved through his contact with
Byzantine painting can likewise be felt in Ismailovitch's copies, although in
the latter case this is inevitably constrained and subdued by the demand for
precision.

The Constantinople watercolours and copies, however, stand apart from the
rest of Ismailovitch's creative work. His main output, as presented in exhibi-
tions, consisted of landscapes executed in oil, along with still lifes and por-
traits. These works of art are completely devoid of colour dynamics, rather
assuming a hieratic immobility. When Ismailovitch moved to Brazil in 1927,
people began to explain this feature of his work through the influence of icons.
This aspect was largely noted in relation to his portraits,[49] which combined

---

49   Once in Rio de Janeiro at the invitation of the American embassy, Ismailovitch immedi-
        ately became an insider in diplomatic circles there, as he had previously been in Istanbul.
        Portraying central figures of Brazilian political and cultural life – among them the famous
        writer and forerunner of modernism Graça Aranha – became an essential part of his
        work; it was a quick and direct way to enter the artistic life of Rio.

FIGURE 7.7   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *Untitled* [*Landscape of Constantinople*], watercolour and
                   pencil on paper, 1920s
                   COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI,
                   RIO DE JANEIRO

academic precision and detail with hieratic immobility, decorative elements, and a multitude of artistic references. The stylized portraits of Maria Margarida de Lima Soutello, his Brazilian student and muse, are typical in this regard. The artist variously depicts her: against a background of ancient Persian cloth showing a lion hunt; with a scythe in peasant dress against the backdrop of a monastic church; and in the form of Medusa. Whenever his past was raised for discussion, the Ukrainian artist preferred to shroud it with a degree of mystery, semi-mythologizing his work in the Kariye Camii. An extremely significant article by the prominent poet of Brazilian modernism Carlos Drummond de Andrade describes Ismailovitch's studio, where all the walls were covered with paintings – Madonnas, halos, etc., evoking a mystical atmosphere of art that had become a religion.[50]

At first, Ismailovitch apparently saw his stay in Rio de Janeiro as temporary and expected to continue collaborating with archaeologists in Europe and elsewhere. In early 1929, he received a letter from Whittemore:

> My dear Ismailovitch,
> I have written to you in Rio de Janeiro, but I hear to the wrong address. Shaw has given me your present address and I write again.
> I have had great satisfaction during the winter in using in my course on Byzantine Art at New York University lantern slides of your copies of mosaics and frescoes. Have you the original copy of the great head of the Madonna just bent forward, and would you allow me to own it. I should be so glad to hang it in my classroom.
> A Byzantine Institute has been founded in America of which I am the director. The letter which I wrote to you asked if you ever think of coming to Europe and would consider copying for me in Egypt some frescoes which have never before been transcribed and for which I should like your hand. I eagerly wait your reply and hope that now in coming years I may fulfil my desire which I have so long entertained, but have been unable to accomplish, of incorporating you in this new Byzantine venture for which you are so notably fitted.
> Most sincerely yours,
> Thomas Whittemore.[51]

---

50   Carlos Drummond de Andrade, "Ismailovitch e o mosteiro" [Ismailovitch and the Monastery], *Journal do Brazil* [Journal of Brazil] 21 October 1976. CAELMC.

51   Letter from the "American Committee for the Education of Russian Youth," Paris, 9 February 1929. CAELMC.

Though he had clearly considered leaving at first, Ismailovitch ultimately stayed in Rio – possibly because external circumstances were not conducive to a long journey, in combination with the fact that he had successfully integrated himself into the Brazilian city's artistic life. For whatever reasons, by the middle of the 1930s the work at the Kariye Camii had become part of his past.[52] He joined the Association of Brazilian Artists and began to exhibit in group shows, alongside the pupils who made up his 'school'.

After two years there, Ismailovitch exhibited at the American embassy (December 1930–January 1931), including views of Rio, sketches of the plants in the local botanical gardens, still lifes with tropical fruits, and portraits of Aboriginal people. In March-April 1936, he travelled to the state of Bahia, returning with sketches he had made of traditional colonial church architecture, along with "studies of negro types." When these were exhibited, the press drew parallels to his output in Constantinople and even asserted that, thanks to these works, Brazilians were able to see their national past for the first time. As reported in a major article that appeared in the *Rio Journal* in September 1936, under the heading "Dazzled by the Landscapes of Brazil, Ismailovitch Says That Our Artists Should Not Go to Europe,"[53] the artist saw his sketching of colonial architecture as a conscious means of rendering service to Brazil. He urges Brazilian artists to abandon thoughts of travelling to decadent Europe and to turn instead to their own artistic heritage. He cites the example of the *azulejos* (glazed tiles), of which he made copies, noting how they emanate a force of primitivism that Picasso himself might envy.

In December of the same year, Ismailovitch continued his study of colonial architecture in Recife, a city built by the Dutch, which reminded him of Saint Petersburg. On 18 March 1937, the journal *Caeté* put on an evening in his honour at Café Lafayette, where he met various personalities, including the great anthropologist Gilberto Freyre. That same year, Freyre included Ismailovitch's drawings in his book on *mucambos*, a term referring to straw huts or shanties (also to the shanty settlements established by fugitive Brazilian slaves in the 18th and 19th centuries).[54] In 1937 Russian-language newspapers reported that

---

52   In 1935, Ismailovitch was prepared to sell his copies. In a letter to Gardiner Howland Shaw housed in the Byzantine Library in Paris and dated 3 March of that year, the artist, citing financial difficulties, proposes to sell him his Byzantine collection (37 reproductions and 15 studies) for 2,000 dollars and, as an alternative, asks to him to find another buyer through Thomas Whittemore.

53   "Deslumbrado com as paisagens do Brasil Ismailovitch diz que os nossos pintores não devem ir a Europa" [Dazzled by the Landscapes of Brazil Ismailovitch Says That Our Painters Should Not Go to Europe], *Rio Journal*, 8 September 1936. CAELMC.

54   Gilberto Freyre, *Mucambos do Nordeste* [Shanties in Northeast] (Rio de Janeiro, 1937).

Brazilian artists considered Ismailovitch one of their own; in that same year, he was granted Brazilian citizenship.

The mixed population of Recife (Africans, Indians, and descendants of Dutch settlers) supplied Ismailovitch with a wealth of anthropological material, which he continued to mine in collaboration with another of Brazil's most important anthropologists, Arthur Ramos, a nationally and internationally recognized expert on Afro-Brazilian culture and a pioneer in the field of psychoanalysis. Portraits of various ethnic 'types', made by Ismailovitch in the second half of the 1930s, are kept in the Ramos Collection at the National Museum of Brazil. Some of them were published in Ramos's *Introduction to Brazilian Anthropology* (1943–47).[55] In the 1940s, Ismailovitch became a member of the Brazilian Society of Anthropology and Ethnology, which had been founded by Ramos in 1941. In addition to the sketches of Brazilian ethnic 'types', Ismailovitch made compositions incorporating ethnographic objects, symbols, and *mucambos.* They show a definite continuity with work he had undertaken in Istanbul compiling large, fanciful canvases based on fragments of Coptic fabrics (Fig. 7.8).

The anthropological and ethnographic material Ismailovitch amassed with Arthur Ramos was put to use in 1940, when, at the invitation of the famous composer Heitor Villa-Lobos, he took part in Sôdade do Cordão, a project to reconstruct a traditional carnival procession, in collaboration with Maria Margarida and the famous modernist artist Emiliano Di Cavalcanti. Ismailovitch and Margarida designed the carnival banners and masks that played a central role in the choreography of the Cordão. In addition, Ismailovitch painted a large triptych, entitled *Sôdade do Cordão*, which is preserved in the National Museum of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro. The composition, in which the artist depicts himself and Villa-Lobos surrounded by 'typical' portraits of the inhabitants of Brazil, amounts to a "celebration of the ethnic origins and cultural diversity of Brazil, as well as an attempt by the artist to situate himself within the invented tradition of 'authentic' carnival."[56] The generalized image of *brasilidade* that Ismailovitch here creates finds a kind of pendant in a large

55 Arthur Ramos, *Introdução à Antropologia Brasileira* [Introduction to Brazilian Anthropology], 2 vols (Rio de Janeiro, 1943–47).

56 Rafael Cardoso, *Modernity in Black and White: Art and Image, Race, and Identity in Brazil, 1890–1945* (Cambridge, 2021), p. 246. See also idem, "Imaginação diaspórica ou apropriação cultural?: A afro-brasilidade nas obras de Dimitri Ismailovitch e Maria Margarida Soutello" [Cultural Appropriation or Diasporic Imagination? Afro-Brazilian Identity in the Works of Dimitri Ismailovitch and Maria Margarida Soutello], *Modos: revista de história da arte* 6/1, (January 2022), 378–410. Available at https://periodicos.sbu.uni camp.br/ojs/index.php/mod/article/view/8667205. Accessed 15 Sept 2021.

FIGURE 7.8   Dimitri Ismailovitch, *Untitled* [*Study for a Tapestry*], oil on canvas, 1920s
COLLECTION OF EDUARDO AND LEONARDO MENDES CAVALCANTI,
RIO DE JANEIRO

canvas from 1945, titled *Ceja-Homenagem ao Aleijadinho*, a fanciful adaptation of the theme of the Last Supper incorporating the characters of Antônio Francisco Lisboa, known as Aleijadinho, the famous sculptor of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The composition is based on drawings Ismailovitch made from Aleijadinho's large sculptures of prophets, in the sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos in the state of Minas Gerais. Between 1942 and 1945, when Ismailovitch was working on them, the restoration of the sculptures had not yet begun, and they were in regrettably poor condition due to rainfall and pollution.

Ismailovitch's expressive and lively drawings of the prophets can be compared to his copies from the Kariye Camii. However, the way in which the artist made use of them in his subsequent compositions is fundamentally different. Whereas in Brazil the artist's ethnographic-anthropological concerns became part of a dialogue with the most prominent scholars of anthropology, whose research contributed to the formation of a national artistic identity, this had been impossible in Istanbul during the early years of the Turkish Republic. There, Ismailovitch's work had been oriented exclusively to the concerns of an international context and related to the Russian artistic tradition. It was for this reason that he left Istanbul and opted to stay in Rio de Janeiro.

In 1881 Kondakov quoted the words of the diplomat and archaeologist Melchior de Vogüé, French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1871 and 1875, who had proposed that the mosaics of the Kariye Camii be removed and sold to France "to save them from destruction." As Kondakov noted in response:

> These mosaics have been sufficiently preserved, such that only an understandable desire to acquire them for the galleries of the Louvre could justify these recent propositions to the Turkish government.[57]

Had this been the case, then the exclusively international reception of the mosaics would have been justified. Preserving them *in loco*, on the other hand, inevitably ensconces them within the urban culture of Istanbul, which, provided that it remains open to the outside world, will sooner or later become assimilated into a national artistic consciousness.[58] As pertains to the Kariye

---

57   Kondakov, *Mosaics of the Kariye Camii*, p. 2.
58   An exhibition at the Pera Museum, Istanbul, in 2021/22 showed works by two Turkish artists, Fikret Mualla and Nejad Melih Devrim, influenced by Byzantine painting and, in one way or another, by modern European traditions. See Brigitte Pitarakis, ed., *From Istanbul to Byzantium: Paths of Rediscovery 1800–1955*, exh. cat. (Istanbul, 2021), pp. 628–33.

Camii and its mosaics, this is the lesson offered to us by the story of Dimitri Ismailovitch, the Ukrainian artist of Istanbul and Rio de Janeiro.

Acknowledgements

Archives

Archive of the Byzantine Library, Paris
Archive of the Museum of Fine Arts, Bordeaux
Collection and Archive of Eduardo and Leonardo Mendes Cavalcanti, Rio de Janeiro

Bibliography

Alpatov, Mikail V., and Nikolay I. Brunov. "Kratkiy ottchet o poezdke na Vostok" [A Short Account of a Trip to the East], *Vizaniyskiy vremennik* [The Byzantine Chronicle] 24 (1926), 57–62.

Aygün, Ekaterina. "Union of Russian Painters in Constantinople," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2949/object /5145-10440425. Accessed 15 Sept 2021.

Aygün, Ekaterina. "Dimitri Ismailovitch," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2949/object/5138–10436644. Accessed 22 Sept 2021.

Aygün, Ekaterina. "Foster Waterman Stearns," in METROMOD *Archive* (2021). Available at https://archive.metromod.net/viewer.p/69/2949/object/5138-11017193. Accessed 15 Apr 2021.

Basargina, Ekaterina Y. *Russkij arkheologicheskij institut v Konstantinopole: Ocherki istorii* [The Russian Archaeological Institute of Constantinople: Historical Essays]. Saint Petersburg, 1999.

Cardoso, Rafael. "Imaginação diaspórica ou apropriação cultural?: A afro-brasilidade nas obras de Dimitri Ismailovitch e Maria Margarida Soutello" [Cultural Appropriation or Diasporic Imagination? Afro-Brazilian Identity in the Works of Dimitri Ismailovitch and Maria Margarida Soutello], *Modos: Revista de história da arte* 6/1 (January 2022), 378–410. Available at https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br /ojs/index.php/mod/article/view/8667205. Accessed 15 Jan 2022.

Cardoso, Rafael. *Modernity in Black and White*: *Art and Image, Race and Identity in Brazil, 1890–1945*. Cambridge, 2021.

Clayton, Muriel, ed. *Mosaics and Frescoes in Kahrié-Djami Constantinople Copied by Dmitri Ismailovitch*, exh. cat. London, 1928.

Diehl, Charles. "Les mosaïques de Kahrié-Djami," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1904–05; repr. in idem, *Études byzantines: introduction à l'histoire de Byzance*, pp. 392–431. Paris, 1905.

Freyre, Gilberto. *Mucambos do Nordeste* [Shanties in Northeast]. Rio de Janeiro, 1937.

Gritchenko, Alexis. *Deux ans à Constantinople*. *Journal d'un peintre*. Paris, 1930.

Gritchenko, Alexis. *O svyazyakh russkoj zhivopisi s Vizantiey i Zapadom XIII–XX vv., Mysli zhivopistsa* [Connections between Russian Painting, Byzantium and the West in the XIII–XX Centuries: A Painter's Thoughts]. Moscow, 1913.

Gritchenko, Alexis. *Russkaya ikona kak iskusstvo zhivopisi* [The Russian Icon as an Art of Painting]. Moscow, 1917.

Güler, Aysenur, and Vita Susak. *Alexis Gritchenko: The Constantinople Years*. Istanbul, 2020.

Hitzel, Frédéric, and Mireille Jacotin. *Iznik. L'aventure d'une collection. Les céramiques ottomanes du Musée national de la Renaissance-Château d'Écouen*. Paris, 2005.

Klein, Holger A. "The Elusive Mr. Whittemore: The Early Years, 1871–1916," in *Kariye Camii, Yeniden* [The Kariye Camii Reconsidered], edited by idem, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 467–80. Istanbul, 2011.

Klein, Holger A., Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, eds. *Kariye*: *From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore; One Monument, Two Monumental Personalities*, exh. cat. Istanbul, 2007.

Kluge, Nikolay K. *Kariye-Djami. Al'bom k XI tomu Izvestij Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Instituta v Konstantinopole* [Kariye-Djami. Album for Volume XI of the Bulletin of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople: Drawings and Sketches]. Munich, 1906.

Kondakov, Nikodim P. *Mozaiki mecheti Kahrie-Djamisi Moni ths xwras v Konstantino-pole* [Mosaics of the Kariye Camii Mosque Mone tes Choras in Constantinople]. Odessa, 1881.

Kondakov, Nikodim P. *Vizantijskie tserkvi i pamyatniki Konstantinopolya* [The Byzantine Churches and Monuments of Constantinople]. Odessa, 1886.

Labrusse, Rémi. "Byzance et l'art moderne. La référence byzantine dans les cercles artistiques d'avant-garde au début du XXᵉ siècle," in *Présence de Byzance*, edited by Jean-Michel Spieser, pp. 55–89 and 150–73. Paris, 2007.

Labrusse, Rémi. "Modernité byzantine: l'exposition internationale d'art byzantin de 1931 à Paris," in *Le double voyage*: *Paris-Athènes (1919–1939)*, edited by Lucile Arnoux-Farnoux, and Polina Kosmadaki, pp. 221–42. Athens, 2018.

Labrusse, Rémi. "Théories de l'ornement et 'Renaissance orientale': un modèle ottoman pour le XIXᵉ siècle?," in *L'orientalisme, les orientalistes et l'Empire ottoman: de la fin du XVIIIᵉ siècle à la fin du XXᵉ siècle*, edited by Huguette Meunier-Chuvin, pp. 145–72. Paris, 2011.

Labrusse, Rémi, and Nadia Podzemskaia. "Naissance d'une vocation. Aux sources de la carrière byzantine de Thomas Whittemore," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 54 (2000), 43–69.

Lemoine, Jean-Gabriel. *Prestiges de Constantinople. La lumière et l'art byzantin*. Bordeaux, 1948.

Pitarakis, Brigitte, ed. *From Istanbul to Byzantium*: *Paths of Rediscovery 1800–1955*, exh. cat. Istanbul, 2021.

Podzemskaia, Nadia. "À propos des copies d'art byzantin à Istanbul: les artistes russes émigrés et l'Institut byzantin d'Amérique," *Histoire de l'art* 44 (1999), 123–40.

Pulgher, Domenico. *Les anciennes églises byzantines de Constantinople, relevées, dessinées et publiées*. Vienne, 1878–80.

Ramos, Arthur. *Introdução à Antropologia Brasileira* [Introduction to Brazilian Anthropology], 2 vols. Rio de Janeiro, 1943–47.

Salatko-Petritsche, Valeriy F. "Vydayutschijsya russkij khudozhnik: K pyatidesyatiletiyu D.V. Izmajlovitcha" [An Outstanding Russian Artist: For the 50th Anniversary of Dimitri Ismailovich], *Vozrozhdenie* [La Renaissance] 197 (May 1968), 117–19.

Schmitt, Theodor. *Kahrié-Djami*: *Istoriya monastyrya Khory, arkhitektura mecheti, mozaiki narfiksov* [Kariye Camii: A History of the Chora Monastery, the Architecture of the Mosque, the Mosaics in the Narthexes]. Sofia, 1906.

Shaw, Wendy, M.K. *Possessors and Possesed. Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Berkeley, Calif., 2003.

Shaw, Wendy, M.K. *Ottoman Painting. Reflections of Western Art from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic*. London/New York, 2011.

Susak, Vita. *Alexis Gritchenko: Dynamocolor*. Kyiv, 2017.

Teteriatnikov, Natalia, "Thomas Whittemore, the Byzantine Institute of America, and the Kariye," in *Kariye*: *from Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore*: *one monument, two monumental personalities,* edited by Holger A. Klein, Robert G. Ousterhout, and Brigitte Pitarakis, pp. 33–61. Istanbul, 2007.

Underwood, Paul A. *The Kariye Djami*, 3 vols. New York, 1966.

Vzdornov, Gerold. "Russkie khudozhniki i vizantijskoe iskusstvo v Konstantinopole" [Russian Artists and Byzantine Art in Constantinople], *Tvorchestvo* [Creation] (1992), 30–33.

In the Presence of the Other: the Processes and Problematics of Co-Habiting Religious Sites

Glenn Bowman

Over the past decades much of my research has concerned social relations around what are popularly referred to as 'shared religious sites'. In my work I have diverged from that idiom, instead calling these 'mixed' sites in acknowledgement of the fact that the term 'sharing', which implies a positively balanced engagement with the alterity of other communities attending the sites, is, while often apt, not appropriate where persisting co-habitation is tense, if not openly hostile. Robert Hayden, a scholar with whom I have debated the dynamics of mixing since his 2002 *Current Anthropology* article on competitive sharing, speaks of 'antagonistic tolerance' occurring in situations where the balance of power between communities concurrently revering a holy place is such that each group's hold on the site is equally strong or, alternatively, the power of the claim of one of the communities is weak enough to not threaten the other's hegemony and can therefore be effectively ignored.[1] Either way, the other is 'put up with'; tolerance here is a negative term, and signs testifying to the other's claim on the site are irritants. Dionigi Albera, however, criticizes the 'primordialist reasoning' underlying Hayden's fixing of communal identity into antagonistic blocs and maintains that the mixing and sharing visible in coexistent practices and iconographies throughout the Mediterranean Basin, past and present, reveal a "fluidity and changeability of groups and identities," suggesting that "in everyday life religious identities are frequently composites, and sometimes indeterminate."[2] Here signs of the other may be mutually revered, and sharing is unproblematic, if not celebrated. This dissension indicates a need for clarification about what conditions lend themselves to sharing, to various degrees of mixing, or to antagonisms merging on eviction.

---

1 Robert Hayden, "Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans," *Current Anthropology* 43/2 (2002), 205–31.

2 Dionigi Albera, "'Why are you mixing what cannot be mixed?' Shared Devotions in the Monotheisms," *History and Anthropology* 19/1 (2008), 37–59, esp. 54–55.

Ironically, the Kariye Camii/Chora has, in its modality as a holy site, never been shared or mixed in any overt manner. An Orthodox Christian site since its foundation in the early 4th century, it was converted into a mosque between 1508 and 1511 by Atîk Ali Pasha. Paul A. Underwood writes that Ali Pasha, in order to mark the site as an exclusively Islamic one, ordered covered

> with opaque media all anatomical elements pertaining strictly to human or living creatures, such as heads, hands and feet. In addition, all inscriptions and Christian attributes were similarly covered, but garments, elements of landscape and backgrounds were spared.[3]

Later, Underwood claims, all painted surfaces were whitewashed excepting only ornamental details on window soffits. Robert G. Ousterhout, writing with the hindsight of 45 years of archaeological work and resulting scholarship, claims that Ottoman iconoclasm was not so fierce prior to the 17th and 18th centuries and notes that as late as 1568 "the mosaics and frescoes remained visible."[4] Subsequently, they were covered with plaster and paint but, even then, not completely. Regardless of the intensity or temporality of Ottoman iconoclasm, the fact that by the late 19th century the mosaic and painted imagery on the interior walls was "covered by wooden doors, which the custodian [prompted by tourists] would open for a little *bahşiş* [bribe]" indicates that Christian imagery within the mosque was barely tolerated, and that only in situations bordering on the illicit.[5]

In 1945, under the nationalizing agenda established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the mosque was secularized and, like the Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) earlier, was turned into a museum owned by the Turkish state and celebrating the mixed heritage of the Turkish people. With this changed function, Christian iconography was no longer problematic and became instead a legacy to be celebrated by both a national and an international audience. Thus, the Byzantine Institute of America was invited to clean and conserve the mosaics and frescoes (the Institute had undertaken a similar project in Hagia Sophia, starting in June 1931). It is important to note here, however, that we are no longer discussing a church or a mosque but instead a secular monument of a national heritage. Therefore, while bearing the traces of both roles, the building does

---

3 Paul A. Underwood, "First Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute 1952–1954," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9/10 (1956), 253–88, esp. 259.

4 Robert G. Ousterhout, *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (Istanbul/London, 2002), p. 15.

5 Ibid.

not serve as a site of religious observance and in no way demands any particular religious comportment.

As Yael Navaro-Yashin argues in her *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*, secularism and Islamism serve as different guises for a culture of statism whereby groups compete to claim Turkish culture for themselves and their ways of life.[6] With the 1946 establishment of multi-party elections in Turkey, religion became politicized as an important tool for gaining and retaining power; "Islam henceforth became an integral part of the program of all center-right parties, which in turn could count on the financial and electoral support of religious interest groups."[7] After several decades of secular Kemalist rule, whether democratically established or imposed by the military to suppress perceived Islamicist populism, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party), led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, won the 2002 national elections and, in 2003, made Erdoğan prime minister – despite his previously having been banned from office and jailed for inciting religious hatred while mayor of Istanbul. Erdoğan served two further terms as prime minister before being elected president of Turkey in 2014 (re-elected in 2018). In July 2020, the Council of State annulled the 1934 decision by Atatürk's cabinet to establish Hagia Sophia as a museum, deciding that, since the building had been deeded as a mosque following the conquest of 1453, its use as anything but that was illegal. Erdoğan, announcing the first Friday prayers after the conversion of Hagia Sophia, drew parallels between his successful mayoral election in 1994 as the candidate of the Islamicist Welfare Party (subsequently banned from politics for violating the separation of religion and state) and the conquest of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmed II.[8] The implication was clear: Erdoğan saw his rise to power as indicative of Islam's 'Second Conquest' of Istanbul and Turkey.[9] The conversion of Hagia Sophia – and subsequently of the Chora, using the same legal reasoning as in the earlier case – was evidence of Islam's right of conquest over these sites, the city, and the state.

Here the issue of the display, or alternatively the suppression, of signs of other religious communities at mixed religious sites comes to the fore. Whether Atîk Ali Pasha effaced all signs of the Christian use of the Chora,

---

6   Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, N.J., 2002).

7   Cemal Karakas, *Turkey: Islam and Laicism Between the Interests of State, Politics, and Society. Peace Institute Frankfurt Reports no. 78*, trans. Kersten Horn (Frankfurt am Main, 2007).

8   Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Reconversion of Istanbul's Byzantine Monuments Emboldens Religious Extremism," in *Ahval*. Available at http://ahval.co/en-92080. Accessed 25 Aug 2021.

9   Anne-Christine Hoff, "Turkish Imperialism: Erdoğan's 'Second Conquest' of the Christians," *Middle East Quarterly* 28/4 (2021), 1–6.

as Underwood claims, or whether these remained in place until the 17th and 18th centuries when the regime of capitulations began to be perceived as a threat to Ottoman hegemony, it is evident in earlier iconoclasms – as in the attitudes of Erdoğan and his government towards Christian markers in Hagia Sophia and the Kariye Camii/Chora – that those who 'own' these sites deem it essential to erase, desacralize, or otherwise disempower the icons or objects of other communities. In doing so, they seek to monumentalize the Islamic identity of the site and of the state that controls it. Ironically in the instances of Hagia Sophia and the Chora, the earlier Kemalist museumization of both sites had already effectively desacralized their Christian and Islamic elements; the efforts of Erdoğan and his supporters have re-sacralized the Islamic elements, while leaving as touristic attractions whatever Christian iconology has not been covered or effaced. I will discuss, towards the end of this paper, the specific strategies by which Islamic practices have coexisted with the Christian iconography of the Chora. The efforts by Erdoğan and his supporters to hide the sight of Christian imagery from Muslim worshipers would seem to support Hayden's contention that antagonistic agencies will struggle to efface or desacralize signs of the other's presence, expunging, when sufficiently empowered, all salient evidence of the previous presence of that other. Nonetheless, antagonisms, even when powerful, are tempered by other considerations that may perpetuate forms of sharing or mixing. In the following pages, I will demonstrate, using examples drawn from my fieldwork in West Bank Palestine and North Macedonia, that the character and quality of mixing and sharing around shrines is not simply determined by inter-communal antagonism (where relevant to the case in question) but depends on local contexts and traditions as well as on intervention in the local context by agencies sited beyond the domains of the immediate populations involved. Identity markers, so much a concern to the Islamicist programme of Erdoğan and his allies, remain both central to the politics of inter-communal shrine practices and considerably more unfixed in their significations.

Bethlehem District, West Bank Palestine

Bethlehem District, to the south of Jerusalem, has long hosted a mixed population of Muslims and Christians. Although the proportion of the latter has dropped very considerably as a consequence of the movement of Muslim refugees into the region in the wake of the 1948 *nakba* (catastrophe) and the subsequent and prolonged emigration of Christian Palestinians out of their homeland, relations between the two faith communities has for the most part

been amicable. Local calendrical festivals, nominally commemorating saints, prophets, and significant religious events but often timed to mark important moments in the agricultural cycle, have historically brought mixed crowds together around sites traditionally associated with those dates. Among these are celebrations at Nebi Musa (spring, a week before Orthodox Good Friday), the church of the Nativity (24–25 December, Latin Christmas), al-Khadr (early May, feast of St George), and Mar Elyas (1 August). Other sites have drawn individuals or family groups at less fixed times to seek health and/or blessings from thaumaturgic objects linked to sacred events or persons. The Milk Grotto and Rachel's Tomb (both in Bethlehem and historically visited by Jews as well as, today, Christians and Muslims), like Bir es-Sayeda (in Beit Sahour), attract devotees, often women, seeking blessings for themselves and their children from powers associated with these sites. Mixing and sharing around such locations have diminished in recent years not only because of emigration and the decline of dependency on agricultural production but also, more saliently, because of intervention by religious and state authorities.

Mar Elyas, between Bethlehem and Jerusalem

On the 1st of August 1994, the day preceding the feast of Mar Elyas (the prophet Elijah), Muslims and both Orthodox and Latin Christians congregated in the olive groves around the Orthodox monastery of Mar Elyas (Fig. 8.1) to picnic, to listen and dance to *oud* (a fretless lute) and *darbuka* (a goblet-shaped drum), and to shop for children's toys in the market set up along the adjoining roadside (Fig. 8.2).

Because the monastery, lacking any resident monks, had to be opened by the Jerusalem patriarchate for the occasion, access to the grounds and the chapel was only possible on those two days. People with whom I spoke outside the monastery told me they had variously come from Bethlehem, Beit Jala, al-Khadr, Dheisheh, and neighbouring villages to join friends, family, and neighbours for the pleasure of the event. A Muslim who had accompanied a Syrian Orthodox young woman to Mar Elyas relayed that "the religious difference doesn't matter; we all come. It is for friendship and community as much as for religion." Persons circulated from small group to small group, sharing food, drink, and gossip. Some of the attendees informed me that they did not go into the church at all but simply came on this day, as they always had, to be with their neighbours. One man said "we all come to be together around the saint's place."

Meanwhile, others pressed inside the chapel of the monastery. Having deposited olive oil, loaves of bread, and candles in front of icons or with attendant Orthodox monks, some joined the substantial queue of devotees waiting

FIGURE 8.1   Mar Elyas Monastery (West Bank), 1 August 1984
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.2   Merchants outside Mar Elyas Monastery (West Bank), 1 August 1984
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.3   Chaining' in front of the icon of St George,
Mar Elyas Monastery (West Bank), 1 August 1984
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

to place around their necks a chain, affixed to the monastery's wall next to a large icon of St George and the Dragon, before kissing it three times and stepping through it (Fig. 8.3); parents helped infants and young children to replicate the process.

Many left the chapel immediately after their ritualized engagement with the chain, while others subsequently circled the room, offering obeisances to the iconostasis and other mounted icons.

I enquired of several persons why they had approached the chain in this manner. An Orthodox monk told me that the object had been found in a cave beneath the monastery and that it was popularly held to be one of the chains with which Jezebel had ordered Elijah bound (1 Kings 19): "Those who enchain

themselves with it – around the neck and around the waist – bind themselves to the saint and make themselves one with him. All the sacrifices, like the oil for the lamps, the bread, the candles, express this self-dedication." He went on to say, however, that this devotion, while spiritually correct, was actually misguided, for the chain had bound Christians during Muslim persecutions; the object came to be associated with the monastery because local Christians had hidden from their Muslim oppressors in the caves below. A young scout leader from the Beit Jala Orthodox troop, attending to help with the ceremonies, concurred that Elijah had been a great protector of the Christians during their persecutions. Pointing to an icon of Elijah killing the prophets of Baal, he told me, with a blithe disregard for scriptural chronology, that it represented Elijah slaughtering Jews and Muslims who persecuted the Christians. He added that the chain was particularly useful for alleviating insanity. Whereas the monk had stressed that local Christians effectively 'chained' themselves to the Orthodox Church through their devotions, the scout leader underscored Elijah's role as a protector of local Christians rather than as a representative of the Church. He went on to characterize the Greek-dominated Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre as an enemy of Palestinian Christians, asserting that its domination of the Orthodox Church and of local Christians "feels like a foreign occupation." Whereas both the monk and the scout see Muslims, at least historically, as among the enemies Elijah protects against, the scout's discourse adds the Orthodox Church to the list of persecutors of local Christians.

Two Muslim women who had just stepped through the chain told me that they "come for the chain" and that the chain is linked to another at the Greek Orthodox monastery of St George, in the nearby Muslim village of al-Khadr. The object, they claimed, is not only potent in curing mental illness but also a number of other afflictions, including various sicknesses, bad luck, sinfulness, and even the evil eye. For them, the chain is powerful because "it is the same as" another in al-Khadr that possesses thaumaturgic qualities.[10] The ethnographer and physician Tawfik Canaan described the role of chains in curing the mad at the monastery of St George. Until the early years of the 20th century, the afflicted were imprisoned in the narthex by chains fixed around their necks, drawn through windows into the chapel, and fastened to internal columns. They were kept that way until their conditions "got somewhat normal," at which point they were released, being informed that the saint

---

10   Neither the two women, nor other Muslim attendees with whom I spoke, mentioned the association of the legendary Muslim figure of al-Khadr with the prophet Elijah as well as with St George.

had pronounced them cured.[11] A few years prior to the First World War, a sanatorium of 12 rooms was built adjoining the monastery; in each of its cells, a "chain [was] firmly fastened to the wall," and a wire connecting the sanatorium to the chapel enabled "the healing power of the saint [to be] transmitted to the sick."[12] By the time of Canaan's writing (1927) the Mandate authorities had refused to permit new patients to be sent to the church, and the chain thus became further disassociated from any particular practice or place, thus allowing it to stand in itself as a generalized thaumaturgic object, analogically reproducible at other holy sites.[13]

Two elements are in play in constituting Mar Elyas as a mixed or shared shrine. One is its historical designation as a site for festive gatherings. This is perpetuated by the social *habitus* of a mixed community that, acting on that tradition, recognizes and shapes itself as an entity. The second factor is the attraction of an object – here, the chain – to which I would apply the term 'floating signifier' insofar as its significance is variously manifested in the way people talk about it and through the meanings they attribute to it: the object itself 'floats' semantically, taking on meanings from the ways it is read by the people who engage with it.[14] In the instance of the Mar Elyas festivities in 1994, there were few, if any, clashes of identity between Muslims and Christians because no incontestable act of power sought to stabilize or hegemonize the interpretation of the place and of the chain in a way that would exclude one or the other community from participation. Certainly latent antagonisms were evident in the interpretations provided by the monks and the scout leader with reference to historic persecutions of Christians by Muslims, as well as in the scout leader's declaration of the foreign priesthood as enemy occupiers, but these were not acted on.

In the following years, particularly in the wake of the Oslo agreements, various interventions worked to render the events untenable. Undoubtedly changes in regional modes of production, demography, and education attenuated local commitment to tradition and traditional beliefs, but far more salient was increased intervention by the Israeli state – for instance, the establishment of a checkpoint between the engaging villages and the monastery,

---

11   Tawfik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London, 1927), p. 124.

12   Ibid.

13   Interestingly, Canaan mentions earlier that the church was internationally famed because of the healing powers of a stone onto which drops of communion wine had been dropped, although he does not link that legend with the idea that the place itself was imbued with a contagious power to heal. Ibid., pp. 58–59.

14   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (New York, 1987), p. 63.

blocking participation by Muslims, scout groups, and all but elderly Christians on the feast days – in conjunction with the Orthodox Church's sale of monastic lands to Israeli developers, including the olive groves where external festivities had taken place. The latent antagonism of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre to the local Christians (in my 1994 interviews, one told me that the local Christians, in engaging with the chain rather than the Orthodox liturgy, "were no better than Muslims") had found means of coming to the fore. When I last visited, the monastery had been extensively refurbished, with both outdoor and indoor restaurants and a parking area for tour buses; previously accessible only on the day preceding and the day of the feast, it was now regularly opened for foreign pilgrims and tourists. The liturgies of the eve and of the feast day itself continued to be held in the monastery, but they had become 'church' functions in all senses of the word with only a smattering of old Christian Palestinian women in attendance, and that only for the liturgy on 2 August. The chain, though, was still there, and the resident monk informed me that Israeli tour guides talk all the tourists into using it. "The local Arabs go crazy for it," he noted, adding that he rarely sees them as "those people can't get to the place anymore."

al-Khadr Village, South of Bethlehem

In the village of al-Khadr on the West Bank, Muslim and Christian Palestinians together celebrate the feast days of Khadr and St George over the 5th and 6th of May. The village, known during the Crusader period as Casale S. Georgii, later took the name of Khadr ('the Green One') because of that legendary immortal's association with St George. Although historical record indicates the presence of Christian inhabitants as late as the mid-19th century, the village's population is now exclusively Muslim. Despite this the monastery of St George, housing a single Orthodox monk, has long been sited in the middle of the village, overlooked by the recently modernized and enlarged al-Hamadiyya mosque.

The feasts of Khadr and of St George take place simultaneously in the village. In the past, I assumed that it was a neighbourly spirit of engaging with festivities linked to Christian calendrical events (as at Mar Elyas) that motivated Muslim inhabitants of al-Khadr to join Christians from neighbouring towns and villages in the streets and in the chapel of the monastery. I am now, however, inclined to think that the conjunction of Islamic and Christian celebrations is a sort of incomplete syncretism whereby some Muslims engage with Christian forms of worship because of the aura of generalized sacred power surrounding the time and place. Christians, while enjoying the carnival atmosphere in the streets, do not enter the mosque, and as we will see, some Muslims

FIGURE 8.4   Feast Day outside the monastery of St George, al-Khadr (West Bank), 5 May 2011
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

completely avoid the chapel, while of those who enter a number appear overtly sceptical of Christian iconology and ritual.

Outside the monastery and along the main street, individuals and families, among them a large contingent of children, gather on the 5th of May to buy food, toys, and musical instruments from merchants who are drawn to sites on feast days, many from Hebron to the south (2011; Fig. 8.4).

Within the narthex of the monastery's chapel, long olive oil candles are sold to a mixed clientele, mainly women, who purchase them to light in the chapel as offerings to saints and other powers associated with the site (Fig. 8.5).

Monks from Jerusalem's Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre as well as from the isolated desert monastery of Mar Saba oversee the setting without any intervention other than offering dismissive comments to me about the proceedings. A number of Palestinian priests from neighbouring towns such as Beit Sahour and Beit Jala are on hand to give blessings to individual attendees. Among these supplicants are a number of Muslim women who not only show reverence to the iconostasis (Fig. 8.6) but also join with Christian women to take blessings from priests via the laying of hands (Fig. 8.7).

Adults place the collars of the several chains that hang on walls and columns throughout the chapel around the necks of their partners, their children, and themselves before stepping through, or having the others step through,

FIGURE 8.5 Locals purchasing candles outside the chapel of St George, al-Khadr (West Bank),
            5 May 2011
            PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

the looped chain. This ritual seems to suffice in itself; prayers are not enunci-
ated, and the only gesture is that of binding, encircling, and stepping through
(Fig. 8.8).

A substantial number of local villagers sit in the courtyard outside the
chapel, resting while observing those who go in. Occasionally, some of them
enter the narthex and the chapel – in couples but not individually – and look,
seemingly critically, at the altars, icons, and devotees (Fig. 8.9).

When, however, the formal liturgy of the eve of the feast is presented,
Muslims leave the church while Christians reverently gather around.

As with the festivities around Mar Elyas, those at al-Khadr bring together
a mixed regional population reflecting both the historic and contemporary
demographics of the Bethlehem District. Here, though, the Christian and
Muslim attendees enact their difference in a more notable manner. This is not
to say that they do not mix, but their mixing is marked – for the most part –
by distinctions enunciated in the spaces they occupy and in their modes of
deportment. There is, intriguingly, a degree of what one might call syncretism
in the way some of the Muslim women engage with the Christian *sacra* inside
the chapel. The monastery of St George, and particularly its chapel, has a long
history of acceptance by Muslims and Christians alike as a place of healing,

FIGURE 8.6   In front of the iconostasis, chapel of St George, al-Khadr (West Bank), 5 May 2011
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.7   Village Muslim being blessed by Orthodox priest, chapel of St George, al-Khadr
(West Bank), 5 May 2011
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.8   Christian family 'chaining', chapel of St George, al-Khadr (West Bank), 5 May 2011
            PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.9   al-Khadr residents evaluating the side chapel, 5 May 2011
            PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

and more generally of blessing. Although the chapel is open by arrangement with the resident monk throughout the year, it is only on the festival dates that it is freely accessible to all. This is also when it is resonant with an aura of sacred power, manifested by the fervent devotions of attendant Christians. At that time, Muslim villagers are drawn in by curiosity and, for some, by a need for sacral assistance with issues, almost always related to their health or that of their children. Here, as with the Muslim women receiving the laying of hands from a priest, they draw on blessings in the same way local Christians do. This is severely frowned on by the monks from Jerusalem and Mar Saba who look on and comment, but for the priests – all Palestinian – their ministrations are a means of giving support to, and in turn perhaps receiving sympathy from, their neighbours.

Bir es-Sayeda, Beit Sahour, East of Bethlehem

In nearby Beit Sahour, a town with a population of approximately 12,500, of which 80 percent are Christian (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant) and 20 percent Sunni Muslim, a small shrine enclosing a cistern lies alongside the central market (Fig. 8.10).

Bir es-Sayeda, or the 'Well of the Lady', is a cistern alleged to have been dug by Jacob, Isaac's son, and visited by the Virgin Mary during her family's flight to Egypt. Its water is reputed to have been blessed by the Virgin, sightings of whom occurred in the weeks leading up to Christmas 1983; I first heard of these while attending that year's Christmas Eve celebrations at the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. During the First Intifada, I spent time in Beit Sahour and collected materials pertaining to the well. The site, already reputed for the curative power of its waters, had in 1974 been purchased by the municipality from the Muslim family that owned it, and a small building, very much in the style of a *maqām* (a domed building associated with a Muslim saint or religious figure), was built over and around the cistern. Despite erecting a cross on the roof – something the town officials had promised not to do, according to the previous owners – the municipality declared the shrine municipal property and encouraged representatives of all the town's religious communities to engage with it; thereafter, Catholic and Orthodox Christians held liturgies at the site. The shrine was open throughout the day, and residents of Beit Sahour, regardless of religious identity, visited to leave offerings and collect well water under the supervision of the municipally employed caretaker (Fig. 8.11).

The miraculous power of the waters (which, frankly, made me, an unbeliever, quite ill when I sampled them) was contagiously associated with a sacred figure whose miraculous characteristics were recognized by all communities. The caretaker, when asked why the Marian shrine was owned by the

FIGURE 8.10   Bir es-Sayeda from the central market of Beit Sahour (West Bank),
                1988
                PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.11   Drawing water from the 'well', Beit Sahour (West Bank), 1988
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

municipality and not, as one would expect, by one of the Christian churches, indignantly replied, "we are here Muslim and Christian, and there are two Christian groups. The municipality builds for all the people, and the people all own and use the well. *Hellas* [enough]."

What made the site extraordinary, in the days leading up to and during the First Intifada, was its status as a sacred place owned by a mixed collectivity rather than by a single community welcoming or tolerating the presence of others. Here, as in Beit Sahour more generally at that time, the 'floating signifier' enabling the communion of the diverse elements of the town was the cultural and political notion of the community as 'Palestinian'. Symptomatically, Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of Cape Town, flanked by Grand Mufti Sheikh Sa'ed Eddin al-Alami and Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, addressed a mixed crowd in Beit Sahour on Christmas Eve 1989, commending Sahourian solidarity in opposition to occupation. When I initially wrote of Bir es-Sayeda in 1993, I took my title – "Nationalizing the Sacred" – from a Muslim schoolteacher's insistence that "we must nationalize our beliefs, should rebuild our customs so they reflect our national life."[15] This subsumption of diverse cultural traits and

15   Glenn Bowman, "Nationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories," *Man*, n.s. 28/3 (1993), 431–60, esp. 449.

identities within an overarching national category is not unlike what Kemal Atatürk attempted in Istanbul. Beit Sahour's subsequent development, like Turkey's, succumbed, however, to identity politics.

Two significant events marked the terminal decline of Bir es-Sayeda as an inter-communal, 'national' shrine. One was the 1994 election of a recent Orthodox returnee from Kuwait to the chairmanship of the Bir es-Sayeda Committee. He insisted that the committee had never had Muslim members, even though I had, in 1988, met two appointed as representatives of major family groups in the town. According to him, the shrine was, and always had been, exclusively Christian. He projected his experience of official Muslim suppression of Christians in Kuwait onto the situation of Christians in Palestine: "We are becoming a minority; things are getting worse between us. We cannot sustain each other ... I am first Christian, then Palestinian."[16] Although I have been unable to uncover the machinations that effected the exclusion of Muslim representation from the committee, the new chairman was adamant that, while "the Muslims want to be represented ... it is inconceivable – unacceptable – that we be concerned with the issues of the mosque."[17] The other event, occurring in the same year, was the appointment of an American-trained Jordanian national to the priesthood of Beit Sahour's Catholic church. One of his first moves was refusing to continue the tradition of offering Mass in the shrine:

> I won't give masses in Bir es-Sayeda, even though I have the right to, because it smacks of superstition. I've told the people that if they want to pray there, they can go and do so, but they don't need a priest.[18]

The priest's 'textualist' hostility to folk religion was an import from his doctoral training in theology, in the same way that the new chairman's antagonism to Muslims was brought in from Kuwait. Neither acknowledged the cultural context that made Bir es-Sayeda the anomaly that it was, and both contributed to the formal demise of its inter-communalism. After the Catholic withdrawal from offering Mass in the shrine, the only formal worship there was Orthodox; Beit Sahour's mosque had never organized collective prayer in the shrine, possibly because of the precedent set by Caliph Omar ibn Khattab at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 637. By 2007 people in authority in the

---

16   Glenn Bowman, "Nationalizing and Denationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories," in *Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine: Religion and Politics*, ed. Yitzhak Reiter, Marshall J. Breger, and Leonard Hammer (New York, 2012). pp. 195–27, esp. 216.

17   Ibid.

18   Bowman, "Nationalizing and Denationalizing the Sacred," p. 217.

town – whether in the Municipal Building, the Orthodox or Catholic churches, or the mosque – would reply to my queries about its ownership with a generic answer, best encapsulated by one's response that "[t]he Greek Church owns absolutely everything. They always have owned everything and they don't (and never have) shared anything with anyone."[19] The municipality's website does not state the case as strongly – perhaps because it is designed for an international touristic audience – but it does erase the powerful moment when the town transcended identitarianism:

> The Virgin Mary Well … is a religious endowment belonging to the whole city and the Municipality has built a shrine over the cistern expressly for the use of Christians of all denominations. It is also highly revered by many Muslims. Inside, the walls are covered with icons and paintings of Christian subjects given by worshippers; but randomly scattered amongst these, there is an abundance of other gifts and pictures.[20]

Nonetheless, in 2007 as well as during subsequent visits up until the summer of 2018, I observed schoolchildren of all affiliations coming in to light candles and pray for success on their examinations. Adults – all women – similarly approached the altar and the cistern with gifts of oil and candles and with prayers they would not discuss with me. A complex web of inter-communal interactions remained in place, involving, for instance, a Muslim woman cleaning the shrine while a Christian woman did the same for the mosque.

North Macedonia

Two sites in North Macedonia (also known as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) are relevant to this investigation. Unlike the Palestinian instances, two of which centre around monasteries and another around an indeterminate shrine associated with a Christian figure, the two loci in the southern Balkans are what Frederick Hasluck termed 'ambiguous sanctuaries' where the histories of the sites render their meanings unfixed and thus contestable.[21] The intercommunal choreographies engaged in by the communities surrounding

---

19   Ibid.
20   Available at https://beitsahour.ps/2018/07/31/the-virgin-mary-well/. Accessed 25 Aug 2021.
21   Frederick Hasluck, "Ambiguous Sanctuaries and Bektashi Propaganda," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 20 (1914), 94–119.

both Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā and Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church foreground aspects of sharing, tolerance and antagonism that did not appear in the West Bank cases.

Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā, Makedonski Brod, Region of Southwestern Macedonia

The Macedonian Orthodox church of Sveti Nikola (St Nicholas) lies on the outskirts of Makedonski Brod. This rural municipality of approximately 6,000 Christians is itself located in the Kičevo municipality of southwestern Macedonia, a rural district characterized by a rich array of unmixed Muslim (predominantly Sufi) and Christian villages. The building is small and square (6.5 metre), with an apse, clearly a later addition, on its southern wall; there is no cross on the roof, although one is incised into the outer wall of that apse (Fig. 8.12).

The building's orientation, rather than being east-west as is nearly universal in churches, is north-south. Within the chapel, displaced to the west of the central axis, is a raised structure, approximately two metres by three-quarters of a metre and covered with a simple cloth of green silk.

These incongruities can be explained by the building's history. It is the only remaining element of a Bektashi *tekke* (a Sufi gathering place) that was constructed soon after the arrival of the Ottoman Turks in the southern Balkans in the mid-14th century. With the Serbian conquest of the region in the late 19th century and the resulting displacement of Makedonski Brod's majority-Muslim population, the *türbe* (mausoleum) of the *tekke* was converted to a church, with the addition of the apse. The remainder of the *tekke* disappeared. After the First World War, and with the construction of a larger church in the centre of town, Sveti Nikola ceased to serve as a church – though apparently both Christians and Muslims from the region continued to visit the site. During the socialist period, it fell into ruin, but in the 1980s, after the death of Tito, the Islamic community moved to revitalize it as a mosque, thus prompting the district's Orthodox metropolitan to restore it as a Christian site. It was sanctified in 1994 amidst the fervour of post-socialist nationalism.

The caretaker who lives in an adjoining building opens the shrine for visits throughout the year. Unusually for a Christian site, the interior stone-slab floor is covered – except on the occasion of the feast days of St George (5th and 6th of May) – with multiple overlapping carpets, some clearly Islamic prayer rugs. The iconostasis is dense with relatively crude icons of saints, and the rest of the shrine's walls are covered with Christian icons, interspersed not only with Sufi images of Mecca, Ali, and Hussein (most likely of Shia origin) but also with occasional kitsch elements, such as a picture of a little girl watering

FIGURE 8.12   View of the southern face of Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā, Makedonski Brod
(southwestern Macedonia), 5 May 2006
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

flowers and a scarf with an image of a cartoon ghost, draped over an icon of the Virgin and Child (!). The green cloth bedecking the raised platform is itself covered with flowers, hand-embroidered cloth, paper money, green ox-tallow candles, and Muslim prayer beads (*sibha*), along with iconic representations of St Nicholas and St George. Clustered around the platform, as well as next to the shrine's door, are gifts of olive oil, sweets, candles, and items of clothing.

Two sets of traditions sanctify the site – Muslim and Christian – reflecting the two communities that revere it. The Muslims who attend are aligned variously with the area's numerous Sufi sects. When asked about the shrine, local Christians related stories of how, "in the past," an old bearded man saved the townspeople from plague by having them kill an ox, cut its hide into strips, link them together, and mark out for dedication to a monastery as much land as could be contained within the resultant rope. The old man – Sveti Nikola – is believed to lie buried beneath the raised platform within the church. Visiting Muslims told exactly the same story, except in their version the old man was Hidr Bābā, a Bektashi saint whose tomb lies within the former *turbe*. Despite this discrepancy, relations between the Christians who 'own' the site and

visiting Muslims are more than cordial. The quality of this relationship and the arrangements that perpetuate it were evident during the preparations for the 2006 feast day of St Nicholas and the events that followed.

Preparations preceding the 5th of May involve hiding signs of the Muslim presence and rendering the site more like an Orthodox church: the carpets are taken up, and the various Muslim images and objects are hidden from the view of visitors – ironically, being moved to the sanctuary, behind the iconostasis. The green 'Muslim' candles and the *sibhah* are removed from the 'tomb' of St Nicholas and replaced with white 'Christian' candles, red eggs, and a smaller set of Christian prayer beads. The site, thus 'Christianized', is ready for the hundreds of visitors – all but a few Christian – who arrive throughout the 5th and the following day. At dawn on the 7th, the caretaker, her son, and a number of men associated with the town's main church 'return' the site to its normal mixed state. The carpets are carefully re-laid, and the Islamic images are brought out from the iconostasis and restored to their previous locations. Intense discussion takes place around where exactly the image of Ali with his sword, Zulfiqar, should be mounted and how the cloth that partially covers it should be draped (Fig. 8.13).

The *sibhah* are replaced on the platform, and the green tallow candles are returned and lit because "they are coming and must be made to feel at home."[22]

Making Muslims from the surrounding villages feel 'at home' is far less a matter of welcoming them into the Christian community than of returning the site at which they mix with Christians to the same condition as that with which they are familiar. On the morning of the feast day, a delegation led by the head of one of Kičevo's Sufi orders accessed the shrine and, insisting on the exclusion of the caretaker and the priest, investigated the interior to make sure that the signs of Islamic presence had been respectfully treated. One suspects that they were aware of, and approved of, the mounting of the Muslim images (which had been stored facing the wall in the sanctuary during preparations for the feast) amidst the Christian icons in the holiest section of the church (Fig. 8.14).

Satisfied with their investigation, the delegates allowed the caretaker and others in and prayed within the still 'Christianized' shrine, around the place where Hidr Bābā's tomb had been located until its decentring during the 1994 reworking of the site (Fig. 8.15).

---

22   Glenn Bowman, "Orthodox-Muslim Interactions at 'Mixed Shrines' in Macedonia," in
      Eastern Christians in Anthropological Perspective, ed. Chris Hann, and Hermann Goltz
      (Berkeley, 2010), pp. 195–219, esp. 170.

FIGURE 8.13   Remounting the painting of Ali with his sword Zulfiqar, Sveti Nikola/Hidr
Bābā, Makedonski Brod (southwestern Macedonia), 7 May 2006. Note the
displaced, cloth-covered 'tomb' of St Nicholas/Hidr Bābā at bottom left
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.14   Sufi/Shia images amidst the Christian icons in the sanctuary, Sveti Nikola/Hidr
                Bābā, Makedonski Brod (southwestern Macedonia), 5 May 2006
                PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

Perhaps primary among the motives for welcoming Muslims to the Makedonski Brod shrine is the fact that, as Dragina the elderly caretaker says, "the others leave generous gifts – not only objects but also cash – and we benefit from it."[23] Considerable cash contributions from the previous months were counted up by the priest and members of the 'church committee' on the evening of the 5th, and on the afternoon of the 6th gifts given to the shrine (largely clothing and decorative handiwork) were auctioned off to an enthusiastic and exclusively Christian crowd (Fig. 8.16).

The money received went to funding the town's central Orthodox church, and, as several persons told me, the vast majority of cash and gifts came from Muslim visitors to the shrine.

Regardless of these considerations, the close temporal and spatial proximity of Christians and Muslims around Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā has led to some 'bleeding' of practices. This bleeding might be simply contiguous confusion or might represent something bordering on syncretism. After the 6th, Muslims, mostly Sufi but occasionally Sunni, came back to the shrine, offering gifts and

23   Ibid.

FIGURE 8.15   A delegation from the Kičevo municipality praying to the original site of Hidr Bābā's *turbe*, Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā, Makedonski Brod (southwestern Macedonia), 6 May 2006
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.16   Auctioning of offerings, Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā, Makedonski Brod
(southwestern Macedonia), 6 May 2006
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

devotions. In contrast to the historic corrective performed by the Kičevo Sufis in praying to where the tomb of Hidr Bābā had once been, Muslim devotees over the following days not only prayed around the displaced edifice but, in several cases, towards the iconostasis itself (Fig. 8.17).
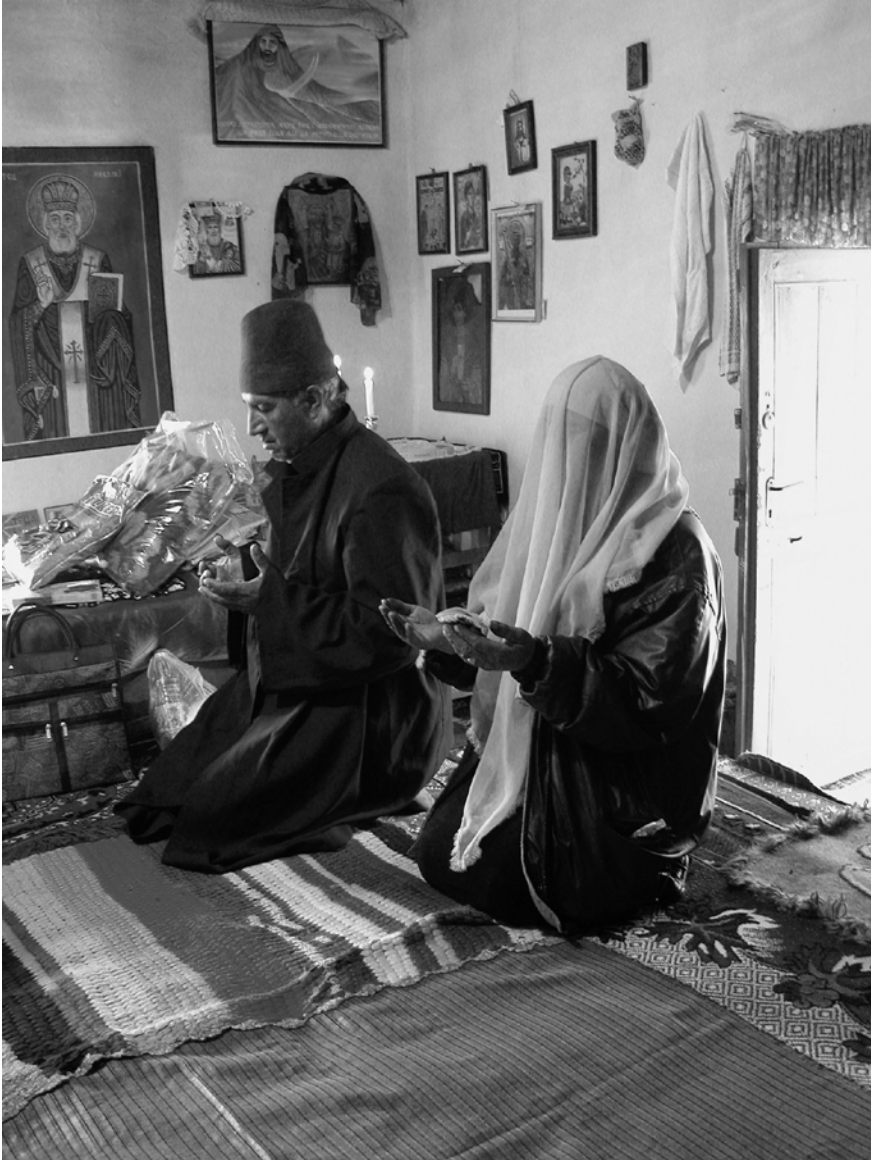
FIGURE 8.17   Sufis praying towards the iconostasis, Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā, Makedonski
               Brod (southwestern Macedonia), 7 May 2006
               PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

More, perhaps, than an effect of confusion caused by the layout of the
shrine, this practice may be a consequence of what Marcel Mauss termed
'prestigious imitation' whereby a person "imitates actions which have suc-
ceeded and which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he

has confidence."[24] Confidence, here, might be a tenuous thing to be tested. Dragina, the elderly caretaker, asked a visiting *dervish* to pass *sibhah* over her middle-aged son in order to assess whether his failure to marry resulted from a curse. These examples are not yet manifestations of syncretism but rather demonstrate pragmatic borrowings that might become such if proven efficacious and adopted by others who repeat them over time.

Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church, Štip, District of Eastern Macedonia

There are few, if any, instances of Christians worshiping in mosques. Insofar as Islam historically follows Christianity and, in Islamic thought, corrects and clarifies Christian interpretations of divine and prophetic messages, Muslims can attend Christian sites that, though manifesting an imperfectly understood divine revelation, are nonetheless informed by revelation. For Christians, however, Islam is a heresy or deviancy, and attendance at a Muslim site is effectively blasphemous. As Hasluck pointed out, "a mosque, unless it has been (or is thought to have been) a church is rarely, if ever, taken over as a church by the Orthodox."[25] Hence, in the case of Sveti Nikola discussed above, the late 19th-century Serbian transformation of the *turbe* into an Orthodox church proceeded because of legends that the *tekke* had in fact been built over the site of a Christian church complex.

In Štip, to the east of Makedonski Brod, the near derelict remains of the former central mosque, built in the early 16th century, stand on high ground above the town of 45,100 inhabitants (Fig. 8.18).

Despite significant damage inflicted during the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the mosque served the town's minority-Muslim population until 1945 when it was closed. At that time, the local Halveti Sufi residents began to celebrate the feast of Ashura next to the mosque, where the *turbe* of Medin Bābā stands. In 1953, the mosque reopened as a gallery space for the Štip Museum, but three years later that, too, closed, leaving the building empty. Through the intervention of the ethnic-nationalist party the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), in 1992 the local Orthodox Church gained access to the mosque and began celebrating the feast of the prophet Elijah therein, with icons set in the mihrab and a communal meal following the liturgy. Holding

24   Marcel Mauss, "Body Techniques," in *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (1950; repr. London, 1979), pp. 101–02.

25   Frederick Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (1929; repr. Istanbul, 2000), 1:104.

FIGURE 8.18   Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church, Štip (eastern Macedonia),
                4 May 2006
                PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

this celebration at the site was based on the idea – for which there is no firm evidence – that the original mosque had been built over an Orthodox church. Throughout the year, Christians inscribed crosses on the front of the building and burned candles on the porch around its entryway. It had become a Christian site.

By 2005 the Islamic community had been revitalized by substantial financial contributions from diasporic Štip Muslims in Turkey as well as other Islamic sources, and projects were undertaken both to restore the only mosque still operative in the town and to build an Islamic school. Muslim activists discussed the desirability of restoring the Husamedin Paša to its previous eminence as Štip's central mosque. They began referring to the building as the Husamedin Paša Mosque; prior to this, and as recently as May 2006, local Muslims themselves tended to refer to the mosque as St Elijah's Church. One activist in this movement told me that the Christian celebrations as they were currently being carried out were "inappropriate for a place of worship." The year before, he and a friend had walked by during the August feast and, afraid to enter the mosque, had seen through the door "Christians eating and

drinking *rakia* [a distilled fruit alcohol] around a table they'd set up in the middle."[26] Despite his sense of the mosque's desecration, he asserted that upon its reconversion to "what it should be" he would "share it with Christians on the day they want to use it."

My research colleague Elizabeta Koneska and I interviewed a priest from the town's main church, Sveti Nikola, who insisted that the mosque had been built over the foundations of a destroyed church, finding evidence for this in the ostensibly cruciform shape of the mosque. (In fact, the mosque is not cruciform but square, as is typical of early 16th-century Ottoman sacral architecture.) The priest told us that

> according to the ground plan, this is a church, but when the
> Osmanli [Ottoman] Turks came, they turned it into a mosque. The
> foundation is still a church. We want to make it a church
> again, but from Skopje they would not give us permission.
> Otherwise, it would have been a church by now … Now we
> don't know what it is any longer: neither one nor the other.[27]

For him, the mosque is no more than a historical excrescence occluding access to the real holy site beneath it. The worship that takes place there during the August feast of Elijah proceeds as though the Muslim intervention was invisible:

> During the ceremony, a prayer is sung, a *prosphora* [a small loaf of bread
> stamped with a sacred image] is raised in the air, and everything takes
> place inside … Outside, the anointment takes place, and on the second
> day, in the morning, a liturgy is sung in the church.[28]

Elizabeta had visited Štip in February 2006 to observe the feast of Ashura and to maintain contact with the Macedonian-speaking Roma community that constitutes the largest body of Muslims in the otherwise largely Christian city. Aware that we would be working together in the spring on mixed shrines, Elizabeta asked the Štip Museum for permission to examine the interior of the mosque and was lent a copy of the key it held in its possession. During the preparations for the Ashura feast, Elizabeta entered the mosque and was followed by a number of Halveti Muslims. Having gained access, the Sufis, who

---

26   Interview 4 May 2006.

27   Ibid.

28   Ibid.

FIGURE 8.19   Ashura meal, Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church, Štip
(eastern Macedonia), 10 February 2006
PHOTO: ELIZABETA KONESKA

as a community had not been allowed inside the mosque since its closure in
1945, removed accreted rubble from the space and swept, washed, and laid car-
pets on the floor – all while leaving the Orthodox ritual materials, including
icons of Elijah, in place in the niche in which they were stored between feasts.
They then, with members of a Sunni organization called the Islamic Religious
Community of Štip, held a *namaz* (prayer) in the mosque (Fig. 8.19).

After the Sunnis departed, the Halveti held their Ashura feast in the mosque.

Subsequently, the key to the building, normally kept by the curator of the Štip
Museum, was found to have gone missing. Little was thought of this until the
eve of the feast of the prophet Elijah (1 August 2006) when, as local Christians
gathered for the two-day celebrations and began setting up their booths for
selling foodstuffs and candles, it was discovered that a second lock had been
welded to the doors of the mosque. Late in the afternoon, as the priests from
Sveti Nikola arrived to prepare the interior of the mosque for the Panagia (in
which a loaf on a plate is elevated in honour of the Virgin Mary before being
shared among participants) and for the festive liturgy, it became evident that
the second lock had been mounted by the Islamic Religious Community and
that no one present had a key (Fig. 8.20).

FIGURE 8.20   Second lock on the door of Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church, Štip
(eastern Macedonia), 1 August 2006
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

FIGURE 8.21   Christians outside the locked church on the feast of the prophet Elijah,
Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church, Štip (eastern Macedonia),
2 August 2006
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

The Muslim organization, when contacted, refused to remove the lock, claiming that the site was a mosque and theirs. Amidst muted mutterings and assertions that the site had been used for the feast since time immemorial, the Panagia and the anointing were held on the portico while local people leaned candles against the doors and piled small gifts of cloth and flowers in front of them (Fig. 8.21).

Throughout the evening and over the following day, locals came, prayed, and left dismayed and angry.

Conclusion: Kariye Camii/Chora, Istanbul

The varied modalities of inter-communal coexistence around the sacred sites examined above demonstrate that the nature and quality of mixing or sharing are dependent on a number of variables, both historic and contemporaneous. Returning to the Kariye Camii/Chora, I stress that the site and its context

differ significantly from the others heretofore discussed. Most evident is the fact that, in its modality as a holy place, it has never been a shared or mixed site; the only time it can be seen to have been 'mixed' was during its secular period as a museum when, unless surreptitiously, no worship took place. The sites examined above have shown us, however, that the communities drawn to shared sites may be attracted to the very same elements, albeit differently interpreted: the chain at Mar Elyas, the well at Bir es-Sayeda, and the *turbe* at Sveti Nikola/Hidr Bābā. At other locales, the communities are attracted to aspects that are differently understood yet exist contiguously, as at al-Khadr, where the feast date and the place overlap, and as at the site of Husamedin Paša Mosque/St Elijah's Church.

Between 1945 and 2020, the Chora was desacralized through its conversion into a museum. Its mosque elements, like those of its earlier existence as a church, were framed as signs of the heritage of the nation, signs appropriate for celebration and touristic appreciation but not devotion – although, intriguingly, in 2006 while Hagia Sophia was still a museum, a dedicated prayer room for employees was opened there, perhaps as the first step in diluting the site's secularity. Erdoğan's programme to reassert the Islamic identity of the state, which he termed a 'Second Conquest' both in the inaugural prayer within the re-sanctified Hagia Sofia as well as in subsequent interviews, involved not only building new mosques (most notably Istanbul's grandiose Çamlıca Mosque) but also re-sanctifying former mosques that had been converted to museums. 'Conquest' in the contemporary context, however, means something rather different than it did during the original Ottoman expansion, when a defeated population had to be shown incontrovertibly that its armies, and its god, were powerless. The case of the cathedral of St Sophia in Nicosia, Cyprus, exemplifies what happened, historically, when a resisting city was taken (Fig. 8.22).

After the besieged city had fallen to the forces of Lala Mustafa Pasha in 1570, this central cathedral was stormed by troops who killed many sheltering inside, including the bishop. Next, according to the eyewitness Angelo Calepio,

> the Turks started clearing out the Latin cathedral of St Sophia. They removed the choir, destroyed the altar and other parts and arranged the interior according to their own style. On the following Friday, 15th September 1570, Lala Mustafa Pasha went there, accompanied by his train, to worship god and to offer him his thanks for such an important victory.[29]

---

29   Tuncer Bağışkan, *Ottoman, Islamic and Islamised Monuments in Cyprus*, trans. Thomas Sinclair (Nicosia, 2009), p. 130.

FIGURE 8.22   Interior of the cathedral of St Sophia, Nicosia (Cyprus), 8 November 2009
PHOTO: GLENN BOWMAN

Tuncer Bağışkan notes also that a mihrab, minbar, and *kürsü* were added and that "the interior faces of the walls were whitewashed, and two minarets, 49 metres high, were constructed."[30] In this case, Hayden's reading of antagonism is appropriate: the victorious Ottomans wanted to leave behind no sign of a former Christian presence that might inspire the defeated to resist.

In the instance of the Chora, as well as of Hagia Sophia, the intended audience of the reconversion process is not God and a recently subordinated population but Erdoğan's institutional backers, the Muslim Turkish electorate and, less significantly, international agencies concerned with human rights and tourism. In this sense, the site has two audiences, and two communities of potential users – one Turkish and one international – and can thus be considered mixed. For Turkish Muslims, the place is seen to be a Muslim site of worship and a monument to Islamic Turkey's victory over secularism and Western colonialism. Erdoğan's (currently faltering) popularity and his populist hold on power depend on the acceptance of this assertion. For the international audience, which Erdoğan publicly claims to dismiss, the UNESCO-recognized heritage of the 4th-century Chora Church must remain protected and open to the gaze of global tourism. Pleasing both audiences is not an easy task.

The current arrangement of the Kariye Camii/Chora seeks to overcome this difficulty without expelling one or the other party, namely, through creating a spatial and temporal separation not unlike that of Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre.[31] At the Chora, the Christian iconography, which densely covers the walls and ceiling spaces of much of the building, remains in place insofar as it does not intrude on the explicitly sacral space and time of Muslim prayers. In a sense this covertly recognizes the status quo of much of the building, which, in all but name, continues to function outside of prayer times as a museum. Images remain in the parekklesion and the two narthexes because these do not empower Christians in any bid to 'take back' the church. Indeed, the relatively insignificant power of the minority-Christian inhabitants of Istanbul, and of Turkey overall, effectively negates the threat of their using the remaining images as pretexts for re-sacralizing the building, while Christian antipathy to praying at a Muslim holy site further reduces the danger. All but the most militant Islamists are likely to accept as a *fait accompli* the legal transformation of the building into a mosque and to disregard the decorated sectors of the building on their way to the naos for prayers. The closure of the mosque to tourists during times of prayer reduces the chance of difficult encounters.

---

30   Ibid, p. 129.

31   Glenn Bowman, "'In Dubious Battle on the Plains of Heav'n': The Politics of Possession in Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre," *History and Anthropology* 32/3 (2011), 371–99.

As at Hagia Sophia, the problem of juggling the concerns of both audiences arises when Christian imagery interferes with Muslim observances in the mosque's formal place of prayer. Muslims pray towards Mecca following the five *ezân* or calls to prayer. Restricted access for tourists and others not praying during these times resolves the issue of juxtaposition, but the presence of Christian imagery – particularly that asserting Jesus's status as more than a prophet – in the sightline of Muslims facing towards Mecca during prayer is anathema. In Hagia Sophia, an elaborate system of veiling works to cover the images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary during prayers. The issue is more easily resolved in the Chora. The naos, the section of the church where the liturgy was performed and where now the Mecca-oriented mihrab is sited, has preserved

> its 14th-century marble revetments almost in their entirety but very little of its mosaics. The vaults and upper walls of the church were probably decorated with the most important scenes from the lives of Christ and the Virgin, the so-called *Dodekaorton*, or Twelve Feast Cycle, as was standard in a Byzantine church, along with a bust of Christ in the dome and the Virgin enthroned in the apse. Of these, only the *Koimesis*, or Dormition of the Virgin, survives [on the rear wall], along with standing figures of Christ and the Virgin on the piers to either side of the entrance to the *bema*.[32]

The paucity of iconography in the naos (Fig. 8.23) means that, for the time being, the images that remain are not seen to disturb the sanctity of prayers. Moreover, the still-extant images of Jesus and his mother – recognized figures in Muslim theology – make no explicit claims concerning the Godhead.

There is, at present, a truce between two of the shrine's audiences, one – namely, worshipers and visitors – internal to the Kariye Camii/Chora, and the other – namely, an Islamist state and electorate facing a largely secular body of institutions and communities both within and beyond Turkey – external to it. At issue, and dependent on the interplay of those two audiences, is the question of whether the rather delicate arrangement of mutual non-interference between Muslim worshipers and 'secular' visitors is sufficiently stable to continue; the agreement to keep Islamic prayer times and places sacrosanct in return for allowing appropriate non-intervening visits by scholars and tourists can easily be retracted, resulting in moves to close the site to all but Muslim

---

32   Robert G. Ousterhout, "The Kariye Camii: An Introduction," in *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration,* exh. cat., ed. Holger A. Klein, and Robert G. Ousterhout (New York, 2004), pp. 8–9.

FIGURE 8.23   View of the naos looking eastward, Chora Church/Kariye Camii, Istanbul
PHOTO: ROBERT G. OUSTERHOUT, *THE ART OF THE KARIYE CAMII*
(LONDON, 2002), P. 13

worshipers and possibly to cover up or even remove the Christian iconography. Such a development might be sparked either by perceived clashes between worshipers and visitors at the site or by activities focussed on the shrine and externally organized by institutions or individuals. Erdoğan's currently waning popularity might lead him to play the Islamization card more aggressively, generating populist support by attacking 'European-Christian' interference in Turkish affairs and using the mosques as examples. Alternatively, the organizations that worked with him to re-sanctify Kemalist 'museums' may in the future decide that his programme has proven inadequate and work to force the transformation towards completion. Sadly, at present, 'external' opposition to such efforts is unlikely to do more than further fuel Islamist populism.

The Kariye Camii/Chora is an anomaly when compared with the mixed or shared shrines examined in this paper. At different moments in its history, it has been an exclusive shrine for two Abrahamic religions, a secular museum celebrating the heritage of a mixed nation, and, most recently, a mixed site for both secular and religious followings. Those various modalities reflect the richness of its appeal and the complexities of the attendant choreographies. Set alongside, or against, the other sites addressed here, it displays yet further ways of living in the presence of the other.

Bibliography

Albera, Dionigi. "'Why are you mixing what cannot be mixed?' Shared Devotions in the Monotheisms," *History and Anthropology* 19/1 (2008), 37–59.

Bağışkan, Tuncer. *Ottoman, Islamic and Islamised Monuments in Cyprus*, translated by Thomas Sinclair. Nicosia, 2009.

Bowman, Glenn. "Nationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories," *Man*, n.s. 28/3 (1993), 431–60.

Bowman, Glenn. "Orthodox-Muslim Interactions at 'Mixed Shrines' in Macedonia," in *Eastern Christians in Anthropological Perspective*, edited by Chris Hann, and Hermann Goltz, pp. 195–219. Berkeley, Calif., 2010.

Bowman, Glenn. "In Dubious Battle on the Plains of Heav'n': The Politics of Possession in Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre," *History and Anthropology* 32/3 (2011), 371–99.

Bowman, Glenn. "Nationalizing and Denationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories," in *Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine: Religion and Politics*, edited by Yitzhak Reiter, Marshall J. Breger, and Leonard Hammer, pp. 195–227. New York, 2012.

Canaan, Tawfik. *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*. London, 1927.

Hasluck, Frederick. "Ambiguous Sanctuaries and Bektashi Propaganda," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 20 (1914), 94–119.

Hasluck, Frederick. *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, vol. 1. 1929; repr. Istanbul, 2000.

Hayden, Robert. "Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans," *Current Anthropology* 43/2 (2002), 205–31.

Hoff, Anne-Christine. "Turkish Imperialism: Erdoğan's 'Second Conquest' of the Christians," *Middle East Quarterly* 28/4 (2021), 1–6.

Karakas, Cemal. *Turkey: Islam and Laicism Between the Interests of State, Politics, and Society. Peace Institute Frankfurt Reports no. 78*, translated by Kersten Horn. Frankfurt am Main, 2007.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*. New York, 1987.

Mauss, Marcel. "Body Techniques," in *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster, pp. 101–02. 1950; repr. London, 1979.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton, N.J., 2002.

Ousterhout, Robert, G. *The Art of the Kariye Camii*. Istanbul/London, 2002.

Ousterhout, Robert, G. "The Kariye Camii: An Introduction," in *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, pp. 5–14. New York, 2004.

Tanyeri-Erdemir, Tuğba. "Reconversion of Istanbul's Byzantine Monuments Emboldens Religious Extremism," in *Ahval.* Available at http://ahval.co/en-92080. Accessed 25 Aug 2021.

Underwood, Paul A. "First Preliminary Report on the Restoration of the Frescoes in the Kariye Camii at Istanbul by the Byzantine Institute 1952–1954," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9/10 (1956), 253–88.

Index of Names

Institutions

Index of Places and Monuments

MEDITERRANEAN ART HISTORIES

With its reconversion to a mosque in August 2020, the former monastic church of Saint Saviour in Chora entered yet another phase of its long history. The present book examines the Chora/Kariye *Camii* site from a transcultural perspective, tracing its continuous transformations in form and function from Late Antiquity to the present day. Whereas previous literature has almost exclusively placed emphasis on the Byzantine phase of the building's history, including the status of its mosaics and paintings as major works of Palaiologan culture, this study is the first to investigate the shifting meanings with which the Chora/Kariye *Camii* site has been invested over time and across uninterrupted alterations, interventions, and transformations. Bringing together contributions from archaeologists, art historians, philologists, anthroplogists and historians, the volume provides a new framework for understanding not only this building but, more generally, edifices that have undergone interventions and transformations within multicultural societies.

Manuela Studer-Karlen is a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) professor at the University of Bern. Her research centres on the history of visual-cultural processes in late antiquity, the interactions among text, image, and space in Byzantine churches, medieval Georgian art, and Gothic ivories.