"Your body, o empress, is a treasure of marvelous qualities" – Representations of Middle Byzantine Empresses (780-1081)

Kriszta Kotsis

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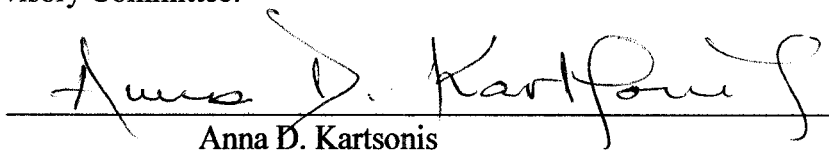
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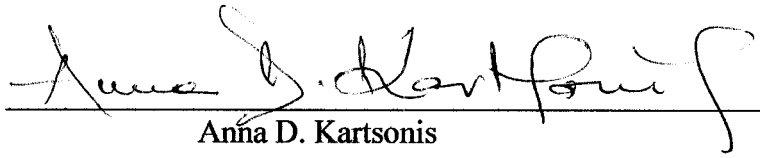
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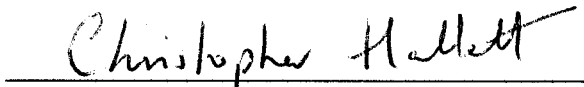


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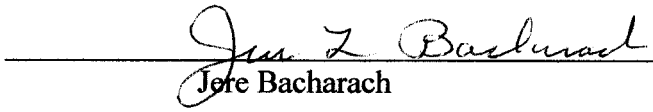
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Abstract

"Your body, o empress, is a treasure of marvelous qualities" – Representations of Middle Byzantine Empresses (780-1081)

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This dissertation concerns representations of empresses in Byzantium between 780 and 1081. Although empresses had limited power and authority in Byzantium, they constituted an essential facet of the vision and experience of the imperial hierarchy. This study investigates the visual and verbal imagery through which the Byzantines represented their empresses and the roles and ideological statements they assigned to them.

The study combines a thematic approach with an investigation of the separate genres of artifacts in which empresses were represented. It draws together all extant images of empresses in various media and analyzes texts that provide glimpses into the ways in which the empress was imagined in Byzantine thought. The bulk of the evidence and discussion concerns portraits of empresses, yet representations of imperial female saints and allegorical figures are also considered along with verbal and visual images of the Virgin as empress.

Chapter I considers the role of empresses in imperial ceremonials, while Chapter II investigates Byzantine imperial portraiture contextualizing representations of empresses. Chapters III through VII examine images of empresses in different media: coins and seals, monumental effigies, ivories, metal-works, and manuscripts. Chapter VIII explores three principal themes that define the visual and mental image of the empress: her physical beauty, her body, and her garments; it also explores the correlation between empresses and the Virgin clad in imperial robes.

Pictorial images of Byzantine empresses are reticent, highly standardized, abstract effigies conspicuously removed from the mundane qualities of common experience.

They are not intended to represent a perception of reality in an illusionistic or realistic manner, rather they are part of a distinctive world of the visual image that is in a dynamic dialogue with the wider social and cultural context from which it emerges. Representations of empresses lack an independent iconography as no specifically feminine imperial imagery was developed elevating important aspects of the uniquely feminine imperial experience. Rather, images of empresses were integrated into the male imperial iconography and empresses served as attributes or personifications along the side of the emperor, within the image of the imperial family, and in the thought world of Byzantium.

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INTRODUCTION

The glamorous empresses of the Byzantine court have captured the imagination not only of their contemporaries but also countless generations of historians and artists. Thanks to Prokopios's wickedly salacious stories about life in the court of Justinian and to the renowned mosaics in the church of San Vitale, by far the most famous among these imperial women is the sixth-century Theodora, who ascended to the purple from the tawdry glitter of a circus troop. Theodora's persona has inspired a series of novels,[1] plays,[2] movies,[3] and even musical compositions.[4] Although Theodora's fame and notoriety has somewhat eclipsed other empresses in the popular imagination, a number of intriguing women of the Byzantine court have also received attention by novelists. For instance, Holland's *The Belt of Gold* uses the court of Irene, who ordered the blinding of her own son so that she might become the first woman to sit as sole ruler on the Byzantine throne, as the backdrop to recount the amorous adventures of a Frankish nobleman in Byzantium.[5] Frederic Harrison's novel showcases the empress Theophano – who married the powerful general, Nikephoros Phokas after the death of her first husband to safeguard the inheritance of her sons as the scheming shrew continually undermining the mighty Nikephoros who is embroiled in an epic struggle against Islam.[6] Ennis's novel recounts the tale of a palace guard of Viking descent during the reign of the purple-

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[1] Gillian Bradshaw, *The Bearkeeper's Daughter* (Boston: 1987); Noel Bertram Gerson, *Theodora* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: 1969); René Kraus, *Theodora, the Circus Empress*, trans. June Head (Garden City, N.Y.: 1938); Harold Lamb, *Theodora and the Emperor* (Garden City, N.Y.: 1952); John Masefield, *Basilissa, a Tale of the Empress Theodora* (New York: 1940); Guy Rachet, *Theodora* (Paris: 1984); Clara Underhill, *Theodora, the Courtesan of Constantinople* (New York: 1932), Eliza Orne White, *The coming of Theodora* (Boston, New York: 1895), to name a few.

[2] Sarah Bernhardt played the empress in the stage production of Victorien Sardou's *Theodora* written in 1884, see Victorien Sardou, *Théodora, drame en cinq actes et sept tableaux* (Paris: 1907); Eve Golden, *From Stage to Screen. The Film Career of Sarah Bernhardt*, (1997) at http:// www.classicimages.com/ 1997/june/bernhard.html.

[3] For example, Ernesto Mario Pasquali: *Theodora, Empress of Byzantium* (1909, Italian); Henry Pouctal: *Theodora* (1912, French); Giovanni Vitrotti and Leopoldo Carlucci: *Theodora* (1919, Italian); Riccardo Freda: *Theodora* (1954, Italian). See Derek Elley, *The Epic Film: Myth and History* (London, Boston: 1984), 199-200.

[4] For instance George Friedrich Händel's oratorio entitled *Theodora*, or Xavier Henri Napoleon Leroux's a musical drama in three acts entitled Theodora. For a list of modern novels, films, and musical compositions devoted to Byzantine topics, see Paul Halsall's *A Guide to Byzantine Literature* at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/byzantium/texts/byznov.html.

[5] Cecelia Holland, *The Belt of Gold* (New York: 1984).

[6] Frederic Harrison, *Theophano: The Crusade of the Tenth Century* (London: 1904).

born Zoe and her various husbands in the first half of the eleventh century, weaving an intriguing narrative from the scandalous plots and romantic episodes that preoccupied members of the court during the twilight years of the Macedonian dynasty.[7] Yet despite the great popular and scholarly interest in Byzantine empresses, no study to date has systematically analyzed visual representations of Byzantine imperial women of the eighth through the eleventh centuries. It is this task that this dissertation undertakes.

This study collects and analyzes representations of Byzantine empresses — historical empresses as well as certain images of empresses as saints and allegorical figures — from the late eighth through the late eleventh century that are extant or known from textual sources and considers a wide array of visual evidence ranging from small coins of mass distribution to expensive monumental mosaics or lavishly illuminated codices reserved for the gaze of the select few.[8] As its starting point, the dissertation takes the images of the eighth century empress Irene and traces representations of imperial women up to the last quarter of the eleventh century concluding with the effigies of Maria of Alania, covering almost exactly three centuries from 780 to 1081. Although this period does not coincide exactly with the Middle Byzantine era (843-1204), which is frequently used for delimiting the scope of studies, several factors recommended the selection of the 780-1081 time frame. The empress Irene (780-802) is the first imperial woman whose representations survive after a hiatus of a century and a half, and her effigies inaugurate a new female imperial image, which later empresses adopt.[9] Irene's representations provide a convenient starting point as they offer both a new historical beginning and novel iconography. Maria of Alania was chosen as the final imperial

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[7] Michael Ennis, *Byzantium* (New York: 1989).

[8] Studying images of empresses together is not a modern phenomenon; the Byzantines themselves followed such principles of organization. For example, the eighth century guidebook to the monuments of Constantinople entitled the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* contains a series of entries that collects monuments of empresses together in one section within the text, see Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden: 1984), ch. 29-36, pp. 92-97. Other documents also included lists of empresses, as for example the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy* or chronicles to which lists of emperors, empresses, and patriarchs were added, see Jean Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, Édition et commentaire," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967): pp. 1-316, especially 100-103. Similar concern of separating material along gender lines is also found in manuscripts that collect hagiographies of female saints exclusively, see Claudia Rapp, "Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): pp. 313-44.

[9] For the transcription of Greek names I followed the conventions established by the ODB.

woman, since she is the last empress before the ascent of the Komnenian dynasty, a family that ushered in significant changes in the role and position of empresses.

In the three centuries spanning the years 780 to 1081 sixty-seven imperial women resided in the Byzantine court — of whom fifty-nine are know by name — and of these twenty-six ruled as consorts, regents, or monarchs, while the other forty were imperial daughters, many of whom died young or were confined to monasteries.[10] Although from the mid-eighth century vigorous negotiations had taken place between the Byzantine court and foreign kings about potential marriage alliances, only three Byzantine empresses were of foreign origin in this period.[11] Representations of empresses (wives, regents, and sole rulers) and princesses (imperial daughters) will be analyzed together despite the typically greater authority and influence commanded by imperial wives than by imperial daughters. Notwithstanding such differences, princesses received a uniquely imperial upbringing in the palace (they were imperial by blood, after all, while empress consorts only by marriage).[12] They were potential assets in diplomatic negotiations, participated in imperial ceremonials, on occasion even assuming the leading ceremonial role of the *Augusta*,[13] and in the absence of a male heir they could become the transmitters of the imperial blood line and authority.[14]

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[10] See Appendix A: List of Empresses.

[11] They were Bertha-Eudokia, the daughter of Hugh of Italy, who came to marry Romanos II in the mid-tenth century, Maria of Alania (eleventh century), whose father was King Bagarat IV of Georgia, and who married two consecutive emperors, Michael VII Doukas and Nikephoros Botaneiates, and Catherine, wife of Isaac I Komnenos (1057-59) and daughter of John Vladislav, the Bulgarian ruler.

[12] For a discussion of the education of Byzantine princesses, see Judith Herrin, "Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess," in *The Empress Theophano*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 64-86. Also see Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), pp. 138-147, where she discusses the upbringing and education of the princess and empress Euphrosyne.

[13] As for example Anna, who was elevated to the position of Augusta when her father, Leo VI was widowed, see Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), p. 147.

[14] See for example the two daughters of Theophilos in the ninth century, Maria and Thekla, who were prepared as potential heirs to the empire, or the purple-born Zoe and Theodora in the eleventh century, the last descendants of the Macedonian dynasty. Zoe transmitted the empire by marriage to three emperors, and by adoption to one, while Theodora ruled alone after the deaths of Zoe and her third husband. For a discussion of the importance of Theophilos' daughters, see Katerina Nikolaou, "Hoi gynaikes sto bio kai ta erga tou Theophilou," *Symmeikta* 9 (1994): pp. 137-51, especially pp. 145-147; for Zoe and Theodora, see for example Ernst Gamillscheg, "Zoe und Theodora als Träger dynastischer Vorstellungen in den Geschichtsquellen ihrer Epoche," in *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und des Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (Köln: 1991), pp. 397-403. I thank Zinon Papakonstantinou for his help with the translation of Nikolaou's article.

The Study of Byzantine Empresses

Charles Diehl was one of the first historians to devote a lengthy study to Byzantine empresses.[15] He argued that the widely accepted notions about the seclusion and lack of power of Byzantine imperial women were simply untrue, and emphasized the role of empresses in imperial succession, court ceremonials, and public life.[16] His vivid biographies of prominent empresses from the early fifth through the fourteenth centuries draw on a variety of original textual sources, yet regrettably no critical apparatus is included in the work.[17] Following Diehl's biographical method, Joseph McCabe's study on Byzantine empresses, encompassing the period between 453 and 1453, aims to provide a fuller history of Byzantine imperial women by also incorporating less well-known empresses into the discussion.[18] He presents an arresting narrative revolving around palace intrigue and romance drawing heavily on Byzantine historical sources but without references to the original texts. Garland's book on Byzantine empresses continues the tradition of biographical history and offers a series of portraits from Theodora to Euphrosyne Doukaina (527-1204).[19] It is a useful compendium of the available evidence and current scholarly consensus regarding Byzantine empresses, yet Garland's approach to some of the textual sources remains uncritical, and the book does

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[15] Charles Diehl, *Byzantine Empresses*, trans. H. Bell and T. de Harold-Kerpely (New York: 1963). The first seven chapters of this book were first published in Charles Diehl, *Byzantine Portraits*, trans. Harold Bell (New York: 1927), while Chapters 8 through 14 first appeared in Charles Diehl, *Impératrices de Byzance* (Paris: 1959). See also Johann Heinrich Krause, *Die Byzantiner des Mittelalters in ihrem Staats-, Hof- und Privatleben nach den byzantinischen Quellen* (Halle: 1869), pp. 180-194, who devotes two short chapters to the exploration of the political influence of empresses of the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries; and Alfred Rambaud, "Empereurs et Impératrices d'Orient," *Revue des deux mondes* LXI (1891): pp. 145-66, 814-38, especially pp. 814-838 who discusses Byzantine empresses extensively in his review article of Gustave Schlumberger, *Un Empereur Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: 1890).

[16] Diehl, *Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 3-21.

[17] Diehl's study discusses: Athenais (wife of Theodosius II), Theodora (wife of Justinian), Irene, Theodora (wife of Theodosius), Theophano (wife of Otto II), Zoe the Porphyrogenita, Anna Komnena, Irene DuKas, Bertha of Sulzbach, Agnes of France, Constance of Hohenstaufen, Yolanda of Montferrat, and Anna of Savoy. It is noteworthy, that Eudokia Ingerina, the wives of Leo VI, Anastasia-Theophano, Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Maria of Alania receive no treatment in his book.

[18] Joseph McCabe, *The Empresses of Constantinople* (Boston: 1913).

[19] Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

not offer an historical synthesis regarding Byzantine empresses. Much historical work has also been carried out in the past century exploring individual imperial women.

Beginning in the 1960s scholars turned to the exploration of the role of empresses from legal, constitutional, and ceremonial points of view. Maslev's 1966 article initiated this trend by exploring the legal position and power of Byzantine imperial women through textual and numismatic evidence, and analyzing the differences between empress consorts, regent mothers, princesses, and reigning empresses.[20] Runciman's 1972 study on the role of the empress in Byzantium argues that their legal position and constitutional importance was never codified, while underlining the importance of the empress for the ceremonial life and "proper running" of the imperial court.[21] Bensammar's 1976 article attempts to define the exact connotations of the various titles used by empresses, and the legal status and position associated with each to shed further light on our understanding of the legal and constitutional role of Byzantine empresses.[22] Her analysis of Byzantine female titulature was further elaborated by Missiou's 1981 article that examines the meaning and significance of the title Augusta.[23] Bosch's articles on the legal position and rights of Byzantine empresses, and on issues relating to the administration of the empress help to create a more complete understanding of the position of the empress exercising her power within the imperial administration.[24] Lynda Garland's recent articles analyze the ceremonial role of eleventh century empresses. Garland emphasizes the significance of the presence of imperial women at court ceremonials and other public occasions, and sees the public display of the beauty and splendor of the empress as

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[20] Stojan Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," *Byzantinoslavica* 2 (1966): pp. 308-43.
[21] Steven Runciman, "Some Notes on the Role of the Empress," *Eastern Churches Review* 4, no. 2 (1972): 119-24.
[22] Elizabeth Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," *Byzantion* (1976): pp. 243-91; also see E. Bensammar, "L'imperartrice à Byzance du VIIIe au XIIe siecle" (Ph. D. dissertation, Paris, 1976). Although I consulted Bensammar's dissertation, due to the extremely poor quality of its typescript, I was unable to read large parts of the text.
[23] Dionyssia Missiou, "Über die institutionelle Rolle der byzantinischen Kaiserin," *Jahrbuch der Österriechischen Byzantinistik,* 32, no. 2 (1982): pp. 489-98.
[24] Ursula Victoria Bosch, "Einige Bemerkungen zum Kanzleiwesen der byzantinischen Kaiserin," in *Byzance et les slaves, Mélages Ivan Dujcev* (Paris: 1979), pp. 83-102; U. V. Bosch, "Die Kaiserin in Byzanz. Eine rechts- und kulturgeschichtliche Studie" (Ph. D. dissertation, Münster, 1976); Ursula Victoria Bosch, "Fragen zum Frauenkaisertum," *Jahrbuch der Österriechischen Byzantinistik* 32, no. 2 (1981): pp. 499-505.

expressions of the ideology of the Byzantine court and as the most important role of the empress.[25]

Historians also investigated the influence of imperial women as imported or exported brides in the internal and foreign policies of the empire. As wives of emperors they were able to assert their influence on behalf of their family, thereby linking various families into a dynastic alliance reshaping the political map of the empire. Recent studies explored the selection process of empresses to the throne of Byzantium and sketched the education of Byzantine princesses.[26] When married to foreign rulers, Byzantine princesses could exert strong influence on Byzantine foreign policy. Ruth Macrides analyzed Byzantine dynastic marriages with foreign ruling families, and underscored the importance of marriage alliance as a most effective tool of Byzantine diplomacy.[27]

More recent historical studies focus on the nature of female power and the importance of gender in the patriarchal power structure of Byzantium. Barbara Hill analyzed the ideology of femininity as regards imperial women in the eleventh century, and argued that the emergence of strong female authority in the eleventh century does not suggest that women escaped the patriarchal ideology of the empire, but rather that Byzantine ideology and notions of authority were more complex than hitherto believed.[28] Hill demonstrated that Byzantium possessed more than one normative ideology and proposed that the rising importance of Byzantine women in the eleventh century is a

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[25] Lynda Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," *Byzantion* LXIV (1994): pp. 19-39, 261-313.

[26] On the so-called bride-shows of the Byzantine emperors see: Warren T. Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* XLIX (1979): pp. 395-413. On the education of the Byzantine princess see: Herrin, "Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess," .

[27] Ruth Macrides, "Dynastic Marriages and Political Kinship," in *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992), pp. 263-80. Also see: Krause, *Die Byzantiner des Mittelalters in ihrem Staats-, Hof- und Privatleben nach den byzantinischen Quellen* , pp. 175-180; Adalbert. Davids, "Marriage Negotiations between Byzantium and the West and the name of Theophano in Byzantium (eighth to tenth centuries)," in *The Empress Theophano*, ed. Adalbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 99-121; Jonathan Shepard, "A Marriage Too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria," in *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the Frist Millenium*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 121-49.

[28] Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* (New York: 1999). For a different view and analysis of imperial ideology, see Miller's work, who argued that the symbolic language of imperial ideology draws heavily on imagery traditionally associated with femininity in order to justify the emperor's claim to universal authority. D. A. Miller, "Byzantine Sovereignty and Feminine Potencies," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. L. O. Frandenburg (Edinburgh University Press, 1992)

product of the interaction of the various ideologies operating within the empire. In her book on empresses from 1025 to 1204, Hill traced the decreasing extent of female power and visibility of imperial women during the Komnenian dynasty as a result of the reassertion of male authority at the time of Alexios I Komnenos.[29] Judith Herrin's recent article identifies three cultural traditions empresses could draw on in establishing authority appropriate to their gender — what she terms the "imperial feminine" — in early Byzantium. First, she traces how the cult of the Virgin transformed the idea of female imperial authority in Constantinople formerly tightly embedded into pagan culture and Roman imperial ideology; secondly, she sketched the importance of dynastic succession and the empress's role in it; and finally, Herrin analyzed feminine spaces created in Constantinople as the arena where empresses could play out their roles in public rituals or through patronage.[30] In her subsequent book on empresses of the eigth and ninth centuries (Irene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora) Herrin adopts the biographical approach, however, also offers a synthesis of female imperial power and influence in the late eighth and early ninth centuries emphasizing the specifically feminine authority and potency associated with these empresses.[31]

The main art historical inquiries that inform this dissertation analyze three, somewhat overlapping topics: imperial art and iconography; Byzantine portraiture; and representations of Byzantine empresses. Although André Grabar's influential study on Byzantine imperial art published in 1936 does not focus on representations of empresses in particular, it provides the framework for investigations on imperial imagery still today.[32] Grabar demonstrated that the depiction of the divine origin of imperial power and the rendering of celestial and terrestrial hierarchy are the central subjects of imperial art. He emphasized the symbolic nature of Byzantine imperial imagery and was consequently not interested in exploring issues of portraiture; moreover, he discussed images of empresses only as part and parcel of the broader context of imperial art and

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[29] Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium1025-1204* ; also see: Barbara Hill, "Alexios Komnenos and the Imperial Women," in *Alexios Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smythe, *Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 4.1* (Belfast: 1996); Barbara Hill, "The Ideal Imperial Komnenian Woman," *Byzantinische Forschungen* XXIII (1996): pp. 7-17..

[30] Judith Herrin, "The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium," *Past and Present* 169 (2000): pp. 3-35

[31] Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* .

[32] André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936).

raised no questions about the nature of images associated with imperial women. Klaus Wessel's discussion of the imperial image in the *Reallexikon der Byzantinischen Kunst* provides a succinct review of imperial iconography and its connections to imperial ideology, as well as a summary of the state of scholarship up to 1978.[33] Wessel's commentary on important textual evidence relating to the image of the emperor, as well as his classification and discussion of the most important categories of visual evidence follow in Grabar's footsteps, although with some criticism of Grabar's conclusions.[34] A more recent study by Catherine Jolivet-Lévy takes up general questions about the visual representation of imperial power and affirms the main conclusions reached by Grabar.[35]

Spyridon Lampros published the first major collection of Byzantine imperial portraits in 1930, opening up the field for inquiries into the nature of Byzantine portraiture.[36] The visual evidence from the early Christian and early Byzantine periods had been analyzed in Delbrueck's fundamental study of imperial portraits from Constantine the Great to the end of the Theodosian dynasty.[37] Delbrueck systematically collected all categories of the surviving visual evidence from coins through colossal statues, as well as the available literary evidence related to imperial images and their production. His corpus explored images of each individual emperor and imperial family member, providing detailed analyses of physiognomies, hairstyles, costumes, and insignia. Zacos and Veglery's publication on Byzantine lead seals includes a nearly full series of imperial seals in chronological order, offering a fundamental resource for the study of official imperial imagery.[38] A year later came out Philip Gierson's seminal work on Byzantine coinage and imperial monetary policy, which offers detailed analyses of the numismatic representations of emperors and empresses and traces the stylistic and

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[33] K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), III, pp. 722-854.
[34] See, for example Wessel's comments about Grabar's notion of Byzantine diarchy, Ibid. , III, pp. 839-841.
[35] Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "L'image du pouvoir dans l'art Byzantin," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): pp. 441-70.
[36] Spyridon Lampros, *Leukoma Byzantinon Autokratoron* (Athens: 1930).
[37] Richard Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1933).
[38] G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel: 1972) I:1, no. 1-128bis, I:3, no. 2759-2760; Cécile Morrisson and George Zacos's brief study provides an overview of images of the emperor on Byzantine coins and seals and explore the connections between numismatic and sphargistic iconography, see Cécile Morrisson and G. Zacos, "L'image de l'empereur byzantin sur les sceaux et les monnaies," in *La monnaie, miroir des rois* (Paris: 1978), pp. 55-72.

iconographic changes of Byzantine coinage as expressions of imperial ideology, providing an invaluable framework for further inquiries into the numismatic evidence.[39] Iohannis Spatharakis studied portraits in middle and late Byzantine manuscripts, and offers thorough analyses of individual objects and conclusions about the realism of Byzantine portraiture, but leaves many questions about patronage, function, style, and iconography unanswered.[40] Constance Head's study on Byzantine portraits brings together textual and visual evidence to reconstruct the individuality of Byzantine rulers from fourth through the fifteenth centuries, providing a gallery of images and brief biographies of each emperor and a few empresses. However, she offers no analysis of the category as a whole either from a visual or a textual point of view.[41] Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson's joint study collects and analyzes twelfth century texts describing imperial images and introduces some primary sources hitherto not available in edited or translated form.[42] Going beyond the interests of Grabar, they discuss the degree of realism in imperial portraits, the physical context and reception of imperial images, as well as their patrons.

Delbrueck published the first discussion devoted exclusively to portraits of imperial women of the early Byzantine period (fifth and sixth centuries) in 1913.[43] After a hiatus of five decades, art historical work resumed on representations of Byzantine

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[39] Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. III/1-2 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973). Cécile Morrisson's catalog of the numismatic collection of the Bibliothèqe National in Paris also provides a thorough analysis and augments Grierson's work on Byzantine coinage, see Cécile Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1970). A brief overview of representations of empresses on coins is also available in Ioli Kalavrezou, ed., *Byzantine Women and Their World* (Cambridge, MA, New Haven, London: Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 88-108.

[40] Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, *Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976)

[41] Constance Head, *Imperial Byzantine Portraits. A Verbal and Graphic Gallery* (New Rochelle, New York: 1982). Further two articles discuss the physical appearance of emperors found in textual sources, Constance Head, "Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing," *Byzantion* 50 (1980): 226-40, and Barry Baldwin, "Physical Descriptions of Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* 51 (1981): pp. 8-21.

[42] Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982): pp. 123-81.

[43] Richard Delbrueck, "Porträts byzantinischer Kaiserinnen," *Mitteilungen des kaiserlich deutschen archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung* 28 (1913): pp. 310-52. Delbrueck's work was preceded by Kahrstedt's study on the representations of empresses on Roman and late antique coinage published in 1910, see Ulrich Kahrstedt, "Frauen auf antiken Münzen," *Klio* 10 (1910): pp. 261-314.

empresses with the unpublished dissertation of Maria Delivorria completed in 1966, which encompasses images of empresses from the early through the late Byzantine periods.[44] Delivorria approaches her subject from a thematic point of view, broadens her study of the imagery by drawing on textual sources, and explores connections between religious iconography and the representations of empresses, yet her study remains primarily iconographic. Anne McClanan's book analyzes representations of early Byzantine empress, focusing on Ariadne, Theodora, and Sophia (474-578).[45] Her study investigates a wide array of visual evidence ranging from effigies of specific empresses on coins, ivories, and mosaics, to generic empress figures on commercial steelyard weights, and emphasizes the typological nature of this imagery, and the important rhetorical strategies underpinning such representations. McClanan's study employs gender as a tool of analysis, yet with the caveat that in the case of imperial women gender was but one of the many social factors that molded their identities. Leslie Brubaker studied patterns of female imperial patronage from the late fourth through the mid-fifth century, and argued that empresses consciously cultivated the memory of Helena in their patronage of Christian monuments and in their pilgrimages to achieve a uniquely "female appropriation of sanctity," which in turn helped to legitimize their family's claim for imperial authority through the promotion of family lineage, dynastic continuity, and stability.[46] Burbaker noted that this phenomenon came to an abrupt end in the mid-fifth century due to the newly proclaimed position of the Virgin as the Theotokos at the council of Ephesus in 431, eclipsing Helena's importance as a prototype for imperial women.[47] Diliana Angelova's master's thesis investigates the emergence of the image of

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[44] Maria Delivorria, "L'iconographie de l'imperatrice byzantine" (Ph. D. dissertation, Paris, 1966).
[45] Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* (New York: 2002). I thank Anne McClanan for generously allowing me to read a draft of her book before its publication. Her book is based on her dissertation, Anne L. McClanan, "Empress, Image, State: Imperial Women of the Early Medieval World" (Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1997). Also see her articles, Anne L. McClanan, "Ritual and Representation of the Byzantine Empress's Court at San Vitale, Ravenna" (Radovi XIII. medunarodnog kongresa za starokršcansku arheologiju : Split-Porec; Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae 1994 (Split - Porec, 1998), pp. 11-20, and Anne L. McClanan, "The Empress Theodora and the Tradition of Women's Patronage in the Early Byzantine Empire," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. Jane Hall (Athens, Georgia and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 50-71.
[46] Leslie Brubaker, "Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronages in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 52-75.
[47] Ibid.

female imperial authority found on the two ivories in Florence and Vienna depicting the empress Ariadne ca. 500, and traces the transformations that produced this kind of image both in the visual evidence (primarily coins) and in the imperial ideology of the Roman and early Byzantine periods.[48] She argues that the iconographic shifts in the representation of early Byzantine empresses — who in the Theodosian era gradually lost their association with mother-goddesses and imperial virtues — is an outgrowth of the new Christian ideology of the empire in which empresses received a new role in representing and participating in the ideology of imperial victory through their assumption of male insignia and their association with the authority and imagery of the Theotokos.[49] Leslie Brubaker and Helen Tobler's article analyzes numismatic representations of empresses from Helena to Irene (325-802), and emphasizes the role of empresses in promoting dynastic ideology and continuity in the fourth and fifth centuries, and traces changes in the six-seventh centuries when effigies of imperial women gradually lost their specificity and independence to become anonymous, abstract symbols of the unity and stability of the ruling imperial house and by extension of the empire.[50] Liz James's recent book analyzes representations of empresses from Helena to Irene (325-802).[51] James argues that Byzantine empresses had greater and a different kind of power than is usually ascribed to them by modern scholars and that they served as a kind of deputy to the emperor, and were increasingly part of the official hierarchy of the empire. She refutes suggestions that the power and authority of the empress was a product of her personality outside the institutional structure, and attempts to analyze

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[48] Diliana Nikolova Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" (Masters Thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1998). The identification of the empresses on these two plaques has been debated, but most scholars accept the identification as Ariadne. McClanan, however, argued, that the panels depict the empress Sophia, see McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 168-178.

[49] Angleova's conclusions are being developed further in her dissertation on representations of Roman and Byzantine empresses of the first through sixth centuries, Diliana N. Angelova, "Imaging the Christian Empress: The Iconography of Female Imperial Authority; Its Religious and Political Origins from the First to the Sixth Century" (Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, forthcoming).

[50] See Leslie Brubaker and Helen Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," *Gender and History* 12, no. 3 (2000): pp. 572-94.

[51] Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press: 2001). Also see her article, Liz James, "Goddess, Whore, Wife or Slave? Will the Real Byzantine Empress Please Stand Up?," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge and Rochester: 1997), pp. 123-40.

empresses as a social group rather than a series of individuals, investigating the rhetorical images of empresses, their titles and roles (e.g. consorts, regents, etc.), their public images, and their public personae manifested through court ceremonials and religious patronage. James sees all representations of empresses as effigies of their public bodies, behind which their private bodies disappear completely.

Art historical studies have also been devoted to individual monuments that include representations of Byzantine empresses, such as the David Casket at the Palazzo Venezia, the Romanos Ivory, the Monomachos panel in Hagia Sophia; these, however, tend to concentrate on problems of style and dating and rarely raise questions about the nature of the representations of empresses.[52]

Aims and Methods of the Study

The disparate objects explored in this study require approaches suitable to their distinctive genres, yet they also must be analyzed together as products of a cohesive visual culture. The divergent pictorial strategies and ideological messages of the various objects or object categories reveal how the image of the empress functioned within different visual contexts and at different levels of Byzantine society, and shed light on the broader question, how meaning was conveyed through images in Byzantium. Given the poor survival rate of imperial images from Byzantium, the dissertation considers together extant and lost images of empress in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of this imagery. While the study explores representations of Byzantine empresses within the framework of portraiture, it also links images of empresses with representations of allegorical figures, saints, and the Virgin in the guise of the empress in order to explore the symbolic functions and associations attributed to the notion of "empress" in Byzantium. The study investigates the meanings and messages vested in the physical body of the Byzantine empress, and explores the threads woven together by texts, images, and ceremonials in rendering her body as a significant symbolic entity in Byzantine life and thought. The physical beauty of the empress's body and her dress are also are

[52] These studies will be referred to in the appropriate chapters discussing the various categories of extant visual evidence.

explored as important signifiers and social metaphors. The extant and lost images are placed firmly into their wider cultural contexts with the help of textual sources, which include accounts of imperial ceremonials, panegyrics, marriage poems, biographies and hagiographies of empresses, and historical narratives. Literary representations of Byzantine empresses are explored not only to parallel various features of the visual imagery but also to reveal significant disjunctions between what is deemed appropriate to represent in pictures and what remains within the realm of words. What is not represented in images is as significant and meaningful as what is actually included. The dissertation seeks to elucidate what the images of empresses communicate about the nature and extent of the empresses' power, authority, and influence, and their role in Byzantine court and society. It further investigates the aspects of imperial ideology embodied by empresses and the symbolic functions imperial women fulfill in Byzantium, and explores how these notions and roles are reflected in their images. The dissertation explores the connections between imagery and the spectacles of Byzantine imperial ceremonials, and analyzes the nature of Byzantine portraiture and imperial representations.

Chapter I analyzes textual evidence about the role of the empress in imperial ceremonials and imperial ideology, and the public image of the empress in the imagination of contemporary Byzantines. Narrative passages and acclamations of the tenth century manual of imperial rituals, the *Book of Ceremonies*, as well as texts describing empresses and their actions by historians, court poets, and hagiographers are analyzed to bring into clear focus the primary characteristics and virtues attributed to empresses in Byzantine official ideology and popular thinking. Chapter II investigates the factors that determine the style and function of Byzantine portraits in general and imperial effigies in particular, and places representations of Middle Byzantine empresses into the larger context of the Byzantine portrait tradition. Chapter III examines images of empresses used for the purposes of authentication, which comprise mostly effigies on coins and seals, and explores how such representations functioned. Chapter IV examines representations of empresses in monumental images; the three surviving monumental images are correlated with texts describing lost monumental effigies of empresses.

Chapter V explores two ivory objects containing representations of empresses, which are linked by the iconography of the "double coronation"; it examines the controversial dates of these two objects and offers conclusions about the significance of the "double coronation" iconography in Byzantine imperial art. Chapter VI investigates images of empresses that come down to us on metal-works, while Chapter VII studies representations of empresses in manuscript illuminations, and brings together images of middle Byzantine empresses, representations of empresses as saints, as well as images of allegorical figures in the guise of empresses to shed light on the role of the empress and the symbolic position she held in Byzantine ideology. Finally, Chapter VIII investigates the significance of physical beauty attributed to empresses in both texts and images, explores the meanings inscribed onto the physical body of the empress in texts and images in various public and private contexts, considers the importance of garments in representations of empresses, and looks at the correlations between empresses and the Virgin and female saints, raising questions about the connections between imperial ideology and female sanctity.

CHAPTER I: EMPRESSES IN COURT CEREMONIALS

A treatise attributed to Menander Rhetor from the late 3rd century, which remained in continuous use throughout the Byzantine period,[1] advised the panegyrist to allude to the empress when praising the temperance of the emperor:

> After justice, you should extol the emperor's temperance, which goes closely with it. What is to be said here? 'Because of the emperor, marriages are chaste, fathers have legitimate offspring, spectacles, festivals, and competitions are conducted with proper splendor and due moderation.' 'People choose a style of life like that which they observe in the emperor.' If the empress is of great worth and honor, you can conveniently mention her also here: 'The lady he admired and loved, he has also made the only sharer of his throne. For the rest of womankind, he does not so much as know they exist.'[2]

Although little is said about the empress herself, the context associates her with a desirable way of life, proper domesticity, legitimate children, and the moderate splendor of public festivals. The paragraph suggests that the emperor is the cause of the righteous yet splendid life of his subjects because he sets an example with his conduct. And it implies that he is able to do so because he shares his life and throne with an honorable empress. The empress completes the emperor, and together they become an embodiment of temperance in both the private and public life of the empire.

The empress stood at the zenith of Byzantine society forming the feminine 'half' of the imperial 'whole.'[3] Yet the power and authority of empresses was far more limited

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[1] For the use of the work of Menander Rhetor in the Byzantine period see George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 133, 174, 229, 270, 293, 324. Although the treatise was probably not written by Menander, it is usually discussed under his name, see ODB II, pp. 1338-1339.

[2] D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1981), *Basilikos logos*, Treatise II, p. 91. For the date, see Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* , pp. 25-26. For a discussion of panegyrics in late antiquity, see Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 1-17.

[3] Between 324 and 1453 only five emperors did not marry: Leo II, Heraklonas, Basil II, Theodora, John IV Laskaris. Three of these were children and ruled for short periods only - Leo II was 7 years old, Heraklons 15, and John Laskaris 8 to 11 while they occupied the throne, - whereas the elderly and ascetic Theodora ascended the throne after a lengthy monastic retirement. Thus, the only adult male emperor who did not marry was Basil II. For a list of Byzantine emperors with their wives see Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 229-231.

than that of emperors, since imperial power in Byzantium was understood as indivisible.[4] Thus, when the emperor left Constantinople, it was not the empress who became his official deputy, with the notable exception of Anna Dalassena in the 12th century, but rather the *magistors*, the *eparch*, and the *praepositus* took on this responsibility.[5] Although Byzantine imperial ideology maintained that the emperor was elected by the senate and the army and with the consent of the people, in actuality dynastic succession was the norm.[6] As there was no agreed-upon procedure to choose an emperor,[7] empresses could acquire great importance for the role they played in imperial succession, and sometimes they even ruled as regents or monarchs. Yet, the role of the empress[8] was not defined in political theory while that of the emperor was discussed exhaustively throughout the centuries.[9] The passage of Menander above signals the type of thinking, or more precisely the lack thereof, regarding the empress in Byzantium. An almost complete absence of systematic discussion and theorization of the role of empresses characterizes Byzantine political thought. Yet, one can glimpse how

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[4] J. B. Bury, "The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire," in *Selected Essays of J. B. Bury*, ed. Harold Temperley (Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 99-125, especially pp. 107-108, where Bury sates: "But, although the Roman Imperium or Basileia was collegial, the sovranty (sic) was not divided. When there were two Emperors only one exercise the sovran power and governed the State; his colleague was subordinate, and simply enjoyed the dignity and the expectation of succession."

[5] See J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (New York: 1911), pp. 30-31, 124 for an example during the time of Basil I; also see Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1935), Commentaire II, p. 77. For the exceptional power bestowed upon Anna Dalassena by her son, see Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1969), Book III, ch. 6-7, pp. 115-118.

[6] Bury, "The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire," , pp. 101-102, 105, Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," *Kleronomias* 4 (1972): pp. 63-89, especially pp. 81-82, Donald M. Nicol, "Byzantine Political Thought," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350 - c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 51-79, especially p. 63.

[7] Mitlon V Anastos, "The Coronation of Emperor Michael IV in 1034 by Empress Zoe and its Significance," in *To Hellenikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr. Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium*, ed. J Langdon, et al. (New Rochelle, New York, Caracas: 1993), 23-43, especially 24-25.

[8] The passages that defines the legal status of the empress is found in the Basilica II, 6,1, see H. J. Scheltema, N. van der Wal, and D. Holwerda, eds., *Basilicorum libri LX* (Groningen: 153-1988), and also in the Digest I,3, 31, see T. Mommsen, P. Krueger, and et al, eds., *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (Berlin: 1928-29), vol I, pt. 2, for English translation of the Digest, see Alan Watson, *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). The law states that the empress (Augusta) is subject to the law whereas the emperor is exempt from it, and any privilege she enjoys is granted to her by the emperor who is the source of the law. Also see Stojan Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," *Byzantinoslavica* 2 (1966): pp. 308-43, especially p. 309; Elizabeth Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," *Byzantion* (1976): pp. 243-91, especially p. 272.

[9] For a recent, brief overview of Byzantine political thought see, Nicol, "Byzantine Political Thought," .

Byzantines thought about their empresses through mentions in ceremonial manuals, anecdotes in hagiographies, references in chronicles, and commendations in panegyrics.

An early ninth century courtier bemoaned: "It is not proper for an emperor to live without a wife, nor for our wives to be deprived of a mistress and empress,"[10] while a 10th century text asserted: ". . . there must be a Lady in the Palace to manage ceremonies affecting the wives of your nobles. . . . "[11] These passages reveal that the tightly regimented life of the Byzantine court, which consisted of the regular performance of imperial and religious rituals according to strict rules, could not be maintained without the presence of an empress. Yet, despite such statements, the evidence available about the ceremonial role of the empress is far less extensive than the information concerning the ritual role of the emperor.[12] Our chief source for imperial rituals, the *Book of Ceremonies*, a tenth century compilation under the aegis of the bookish emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, describes only a handful of occasions in which the empress played a significant part: her coronation, nuptial, the birth of a son, Easter, Pentecost, Palm Sunday, Broumalia, and the embassy of the Kievan princess Olga in 957.

This chapter explores the role and visibility of the empress in Byzantine court ceremonials in the 8th through 11th centuries by analyzing a patchwork of textual sources. It attempts to reconstruct based on the textual sources how the imperial ceremonials presented the empress to the gaze of the Byzantine public before turning to her visual representations in the following chapters. This chapter will explore how visible was the

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[10] Members of the court of Michael II complained according to I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), p. 78.14-16. Also see Alexander P. Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, "The Social World of the Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 167-97, especially 182-185.

[11] Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), p. 147. The text is from the letter of patriarch Nikolaos to pope Anastaisos III in 912 regarding the third marriage of Leo VI. The *Chronicon Paschale* also informs us that the emperor Herakleios elevated his fifteen-month-old daughter to become empress on 4 October, 612, see Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628, Translated Texts for Historians 7* (Liverpool University Press, 1989), p. 154. Also see Judith Herrin, "Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess," in *The Empress Theophano*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 64-86, p. 72, n. 26. Moreover, Romanos I elevated his daughter-in-law as empress after the death of his wife, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , 402ff; Herrin, "Theophano: Considerations on the Education of a Byzantine Princess," , p. 73, no. 28.

[12] Most of the evidence comes from Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829).

empress to Byzantine spectators, and what her presence communicated to those who saw her or had direct access to her presence. Given the nature of the evidence, the reconstructed image will inevitably be a tattered fabric woven from yarns of different age, a patchwork of diachronic fragments.

The Arrival of the Imperial Bride

Sometimes the preparations for an imperial marriage began with the arrival and reception of the bride either from a province, as was the case with Irene who hailed from Athens in 769, or from abroad, as Bertha-Eudokia who arrived from Italy in 944, or Maria of Alania who traveled from Georgia in 1078. Theophanes reported the circumstances of Irene's arrival in 769 (and presumably similar ceremonials took place at the arrival of other imperial brides who arrived to the capital):

> On 1 November of the 8th indiction Irene made her entrance from Athens. She came to the Imperial City from Hiereia, escorted by many *dromones* and *chelandia* decorated with silken cloths, and was met by the prominent men of the City and their wives who led the way before her.[13]

This brief description provides only a few details about the arrival ceremonial: we learn that she arrived in a fleet of fancily decorated large ships and that she was greeted by male and female members of the elite of the capital who escorted her presumably to the palace, since she was betrothed to Leo IV two days after her arrival in the palatine church, the Pharos. The text does not indicate whether or not the emperor, empress, and their son were present on the occasion when Irene disembarked. A fuller impression of the arrival ceremony is given by two later texts that narrate the entrance of two imperial fiancées, the first from an illuminated epithalamic poem in the Vatican variously dated between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries and which recounts the arrival of a Western princess to marry a Byzantine junior emperor,[14] the second from the fourteenth century

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[13] Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford: 1997), A.M. 6261.
[14] Vatican gr. 1851, see Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), pp. 210-230.

treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos that discusses late Byzantine imperial ceremonials.[15] Admittedly one needs to be careful in using this later evidence for it is possible that the arrival ceremony underwent some changes between the eighth and fourteenth centuries; moreover, the latter two texts describe the arrival of a foreign bride rather than a Byzantine girl from the Peloponessos, yet the conservative nature of imperial ceremonials would indicate that many features may have remained unaltered.[16] The Vatican epithalamion reports that the emperor sent out his female relatives to greet the princess:

> With this he sent all his female relatives up to seventy or more, I think, all shoots of Caesars and *sebastokrators*, of crown wearing *despots*, of those dressed in the purple. And one from the selected ones, in whom he had more trust, the king [i.e. the emperor] gave the responsibility to rush to you before all the others, that she alone would see you, justified by the closer kinship, and would dress you in the Roman mantle of the *despoina* and would decorate you with all the other insignia as Augusta. And thus all the others could see you and respectfully greet you.[17]

The Vatican manuscript contains an illumination that illustrates this passage with three episodes of a continuous narrative on f.3v (Fig. 1).[18] Unfortunately there is a lacuna between f.3v and f.5r, where a folio appears to be missing.[19] The text continues on f.5r describing an imperial procession including men and women of the court as well as the emperor, which appears to have visited the camp of the princess. The text goes on to relate that before the princess was received by the emperor in the palace, his purple-born daughter visited her at her camp outside the city walls to make obeisance and to prepare her for her final reception in the palace, a scene also illustrated in the manuscript on f.6r:[20]

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[15] Jean Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* (Paris: 1966), chapter 12, pp. 286-287.
[16] See note 37 below.
[17] See f.3r. For the Greek text of the full poem, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 220-227, for a German translation see J. Strzygowski, "Das Epithalamion des Paläologen Andronikos II. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Ceremonialbildes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10 (1901): pp. 546-67; for the Greek text of the passage, see Appendix B, no. 5.
[18] There are, however, some discrepancies between the illumination and the text itself: it would have been difficult to show all seventy plus women of the court greeting the princess, so only a handful of figures stand in for the crowd of seventy; a more significant difference is found in the fact several women, not one, are greeting the princess at her initial arrival in western garb and assist her transformation into a Byzantine imperial woman.
[19] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 229.
[20] These events are reported on f.4r and f.6r.

> Near the outer wall of the great city, the beautiful castle of the land of the Romans or much more the most beautiful of all castles found under the sky, which can in no way be compared with any possible praise or with any possible thing, in which castle on the next day the Roman king prepared so that you, Augusta, would see in great splendor the great ruler and your father-in-law, — the sister of your groom, the king's first daughter and basilissa went out [to you], so that she would greet you and that she would make visible your power by making her humble obeisance to you. How and of what nature was the splendor of her procession? . . . She came out and met you and greeted you respectfully.[21]

This passage is also accompanied by a miniature, which presents the encounter of the girls in a lavish imperial tent (Fig. 2). A similar protocol is described by Pseudo-Kodinos' text, albeit without the visit of a sister-in-law — probably an unusual event —, which also ascribes importance to female courtiers in receiving and preparing the new foreign arrival: it is the wives of dignitaries who anticipate her arrival and greet her in the port of the Blacherne, or the Pege quarter if she comes by land, and it is only after she is embraced by the female courtiers, that the emperor and his son arrive to greet her. After the imperial greetings the emperor and his son leave and the women of the court dress the bride into red shoes and imperial robes and lead her on horseback to the palace for the marriage ceremony.[22] It is interesting to note that neither of the texts ascribes any role to the empress mother, although in the incomplete Vatican manuscript there may have been a reference to her participation, for she is depicted in the upper register of f.7r, the scene of the announcement of the betrothal.[23]

It is clear from all three texts that the arrival of an imperial bride to Constantinople was a significant event choreographed carefully according to the rules of court ritual. Clearly, it involved not only the groom and his family but the whole community of the elite and most likely, at least as spectators, the whole populace of the city. The first element of the arrival appears to have been the greeting of the bride by the representatives of the Byzantine elite; in the eight century this group involved both men

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[21] See Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 225-226; Appendix B, no. 6.
[22] Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* , ch. 12, 286-287.
[23] There has been some controversy over the identification of this female imperial figure in the upper register, however, I believe it depicts the empress mother rather than the newly arrived princess; see for instance the differing opinions of Belting, who identified the figure on f.7r as the princess, and Spatharakis, who argued persuasively that it is the empress mother, see Hans Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg: 1970), pp. 26-29, and Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 216.

and women, while in the twelfth and fourteenth centuries we only hear about women as the first greeters of the bride. The twelfth and fourteenth century rituals indicate that after the initial welcome was completed, the emperor and his son also briefly greeted the bride at the spot of her arrival, and it is possible that this also happened in the eighth century. Both later texts lay emphasis on the physical transformation of the bride into the full regalia of a Byzantine empress through the ministrations of women of the court. It is remarkable that she received her marks of power, at least in the later period, before her marriage or coronation, yet it is understandable in practical terms: during the ceremonial procession across the city of Constantinople which traversed the city from one of its ports or gates all the way to the imperial palace, the freshly arrived imperial bride was displayed to the whole city and she could be easily identified visually by the spectators if she was dressed as an empress. This practical consideration would make it plausible that similar practice was followed even at the arrival of imperial brides of Byzantine descent, and it is possible that this custom goes back to an earlier period. Thus, for instance, the *Life of Theophano* describes the events that ensued after the empress Eudokia inspected the three finalists in the imperial baths and selected Theophano:

> Examining them in a bath and finding that the saint by far surpassed the other two in beauty, she dressed her in imperial garments, took her by the right hand and went in to her husband the emperor Basil. Throwing her at her feet, she proclaimed her a worthy bride for their son. The emperor marveled at the blameless beauty of the girl. From the fold of his robe he took out the ring made for him of jasper and put it on the finger of the young lady. After that the young empress-to-be received her bridal gifts and lived with the most pious Augusta, her [future] mother-in-law, as with a mother.[24]

Here too the empress-to-be was dressed up in imperial garments even before the betrothal took place, although this transformation took place in the palace.

Imperial Marriage Ceremonials

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[24] Life of Theophano, ch. 10, see Eduard ed. Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," *Mémoires de L'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg, VIIIe série* III, no. 2 (1898): I-XI, pp. 1-132, p. 10; translated by L. Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?," *Eranos* 83 (1985): pp. 175-91, especially p. 185.

The *Book of Ceremonies* describes the rituals of imperial marriage in two chapters, in Book I, chapter 39 and 41.[25] According to current scholarly consensus chapter 41 narrates the wedding of Irene held on December 17, 768.[26] As Chapter 41 reports, after her coronation the empress arrives to the Augusteus to receive acclamations from her staff and then walks to the Octogone to join the emperor and they proceed together to the church of St. Stephen where the engagement takes place after which they leave the church. Following the engagement, the patriarch celebrates the liturgy and then the imperial couple returns to the church for the nuptial coronation. With crowns on their heads the newly weds proceed to the Golden Hand and they receive obeisance from the patricians who fall to the ground and acclaim them at the Onopodion, then the couple visits the Sekreton of the Consuls where patricians and the senate acclaiming them again in *proskynesis*, after which they escort them to the nuptial chamber. The factions receive them at the Triclinium of the Candidates with acclamations and organ music, and after the imperial couple had passed between their cheering lines the factions follow them into the nuptial chamber where further acclamations by the Blues and Greens ensue. They sing:

> Be welcome, empress, elevated by God. . . . Be welcome, empress, protected by God. . . . Be welcome, you, nobility of the purple. . . . Welcome, you, desire of all. . . . Be welcome, you . . . who were elevated by divine election for the strengthening and exaltation of the world, you, whom God married to the purple. The Almighty God blessed you and crowned you with his own hand. Also, to him, who invited you to such a dignity and united with one, the emperor, multiply his years in the purple.[27]

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[25] Chapter 39 is entitled, "What is observed on the nuptial coronation of an emperor," and Chapter 41 carries the title, "What is observed at the coronation and the marriage of an Augusta." For the original Greek and its French translation see Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II. ch. 48(39), 50(41), pp. 6-10, 16-23, and Commentaire, pp. 13-21, 31-41; also see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , pp. 196-202, 207-216.

[26] ODB I, p. 596. Ostrogorsky and Stein, however, have suggested that the two chapters relate another historical event, most likely the marriage ceremonies of Stephen Lecapenus and the crowning of his wife, Anna in 933 and 934, respectively. Still others have observed that this cannot be the case, for in Chapter 39 the bride has already been crowned Augusta while in Chapter 41 the coronation and marriage take place on the same day, one after the other George Ostrogorsky and Ernst Stein, "Die Krönungsordnungen des Zeremonienbuches. Chronologische und Verfassungsgeschichtiliche Bemerkungen," *Byzantion* 7 (1932): pp. 185-233, especially p. 214; Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," , p. 71.

[27] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 39, p. 198; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , p. 7; Appendix B, no. 11.

The newlyweds place their wedding crowns on the nuptial bed and depart for the wedding feast held in the Hall of the Nineteen Couches, with patricians, courtiers and their wives in attendance. On the third day of the wedding festivities the new imperial wife emerges from the nuptial chamber and is escorted to the baths by patricians and consuls while the Blues and Greens play their organs and perform acclamations. The empress' ceremonial walk to the baths is preceded by the preparations of her attendants who carry linens, perfumes, and various other accoutrements in chests, jars, and bowls to the baths. After bathing, members of the senate escort the empress back to the nuptial chamber. Female courtiers accompany her from the baths back to the nuptial chamber, and three of them carry pomegranates of purple color decorated with precious stones, one directly behind the empress and two flanking her two sides. The whole cortège listens to the acclamations of the two factions inside the bridal chamber.

In a manuscript at the Vatican Library there survive three poems[28] from the pen of the tenth century poet Leo Magistros that celebrate imperial marriages of which two were sang at a nuptial of Leo VI, and one at the wedding of his son, Constantine VII with Helena Lecapena in 919.[29] The poems were most likely sung in the nuptial chamber,

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[28] See Appendix B, no. 1-3 for the Greek text of the three poems. I thank Patrick Myers for his help in working with this text. The poems are found in Barberini gr. 310, on f.80v, f. 82f, f.86r. For the manuscript see: Paul Canart and Vittorio Peri, *Sussidi bibliograpfici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana, Studi e Testi 261* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1970), p. 171. They were published by P. Matranga, *Anecdota Graeca* (Rome: 1850) II, pp. 561-565, 568-571 and Theodorus Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* (Leipzig: 1882) III, pp. 356-358, 361-362. Paul Magdalino, who studied another poem of the same author in the same manuscript accepted the identification of the author with Leo Choirosphaktes, and also agreed that it is questionable whether the poem on the wedding of Constantine VII can be attributed to Choirosphaktes. See Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise," in *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning.*, ed. Ann Moffatt, *Byzantina Australiensia 5* (Canberra: 1984), pp. 225-40, especially pp. 225-226. Also see Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): pp. 97-118, especially 98-99, where he suggests that the Vatican manuscript may have been commissioned by Constantine VII.

[29] Paul Magdalino argued, following the conclusions of earlier scholars, that the poems for Leo's marriage commemorated his fourth nuptial to Zoe Carbonopsina in 906, see Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise," pp. 225-226. Shaun Tougher reasonably questioned this conclusion suggesting that it is more likely that the songs commemorated the second marriage of Leo to Zoe Zautzaina in 898. Tougher pointed out that since Leo Choirosphaktes, the author of the poems was away from Constantinople on an embassy between 905-907, it would be unlikely that he would be commissioned to write a poem for the imperial marriage during that period. Moreover, he also emphasized, that given the problems surrounding Leo's fourth marriage, it seems unlikely that a poem would be written about it insisting on its legality. See Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , p. 143. While this is possible, it is not clear why could the poems not commemorate Leo's third marriage to Eudokia Baiane ca. 900.

although the texts themselves do not make it clear at what point during the festivities they were performed, nevertheless they give us valuable examples of the type of panegyrical songs recited at imperial weddings. The poems employ stock imagery celebrating love and marriage.

All songs describe the poet who leads the rejoicing of the other citizens in the form of singing, playing music, and dancing, and the exhortations to celebration abound to such an extent that one is under the impression that these poems must have been actually performed.[30] Although the literary imagery of these verses is stereotypical, they give a more vivid impression of the circumstances and flavor of the ceremonials than can be gained from the text of the Book of Ceremonies alone. Some sense of the appearance of the bridal chamber can be gleaned from expressions, like the "the laurel bearing, rose garlanded bridal chamber" or "golden-roofed bedchamber." The youthful innocence of bride and groom is celebrated in both poems through an emphasis on their pearly white bodies, rosy complexions, blond hair, and fresh breath. The poems, of course, conjure up an ideal image, for Leo VI was in his thirties at the time of his second and third marriages, and his second wife, Zoe Zautzaina was no blushing bride - she had been the emperor's mistress before their marriage and this was also a second marriage for her; as for Leo's third wife, Eudokia Baiane, there is virtually nothing know about her.[31] All three poems emphasize love and desire and the songs themselves are presented as instruments of stimulating desire, suggesting that the poems were preformed in the bedchamber of the young couple.[32]

Unlike the arrival of the imperial bride to Constantinople, which had been witnessed by most inhabitants of the city, imperial marriage ceremonies had a more restricted audience as they took place inside the Great Palace. Thus the people at large were not able to participate even as spectators, yet we know from textual sources that imperial weddings were highly publicized events celebrated by the whole city bringing

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[30] See Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," , p. 98.
[31] Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 138-142, 149.
[32] For a more extensive discussion and analysis of these poems, see Chapter VIII.

food and festivities to even those who could not be present at the actual marriage feast.[33] Yet these ceremonies did include spectators and participants from various levels of society from the imperial family through members of the senate and their wives to members of the factions, who, although paid for their cheering at imperial ceremonies, were the representatives of the populace. Though not all celebrants were able to see the nuptial coronation ceremonial conducted by the patriarch, the newlyweds walked through a series of rooms and porticoes in order to display themselves wearing the nuptial crowns to the larger group of spectators and received the acclamations and obeisance of the various groups in order. The couple's bedroom and the nuptial bed, on which they deposited their nuptial crowns, also were central locations in the celebration and witnessing the new imperial marriage with members of the court and factions crowding around the couple, and thus provided a location where the newly weds received praises of their union and where the pleasures and fruits of their nuptials were articulated in songs and acclamations. The certain parts of the ceremonial of the cleansing of the new wife on the third day following the marriage were also witnessed by the court and factions, and her ceremonial procession from the baths to the nuptial chamber in the company of female courtiers carrying pomegranates probably articulated expectations about the fertility of the empress.[34] Treitinger noted that the ceremonial bath of the empress also might have expressed a kind of consecration of her as the mother of the imperial heir.[35]

Coronation of the Empress

The coronation[36] of the empress could take place before or after her marriage and was carried out in the Augusteus Hall in the presence of the emperor, the patriarch, and

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[33] See for instance the description of the festivities surrounding the marriage of Theophano and Leo VI in the 9th century, in Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," , ch. 11/25-32, p. 6. Also see Chapter VIII, no. 98.

[34] On the fertility symbolism of pomegranates, see Otto Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung in höfischen Zeremoniell*, 2 ed. (Darmstadt: 1956), p. 111.

[35] Ibid. , p. 111.

[36] For Byzantine imperial coronations, see F. E. Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901): pp. 359-92; Ostrogorsky and Stein, "Die Krönungsordnungen des Zeremonienbuches. Chronologische und Verfassungsgeschichtliche Bemerkungen," ; Peter Charanis, "The Imperial Crown Modiolus and its Constitutional Significance," *Byzantion* 12 (1937): pp. 189-95;

male and female courtiers.[37] The ritual of the coronation of the empress is similar to that of the coronation of the emperor with the notable distinctions that the emperor is crowned by the patriarch and his coronation takes place in Hagia Sophia in this period, whereas the empress is crowned by the emperor himself in the Augusteus Hall of the palace.[38] At the portable altar set up in the Augusteus the patriarch recites prayers[39] after which the emperor removes the empress's *maphorion* and dresses her in the *chlamys*. The patriarch prays over the crown and hands it to the emperor who places it on the head of the empress, then the patriarch departs and the emperor and the newly crowned empress take their seats on the thrones. Patricians and other male dignitaries file in to make obeisance to the rulers wishing them many long years of rule. The female dignitaries of the *sekreton ton gynaikon* follow in eleven entrances genuflecting to the rulers. Meanwhile members of the factions and *tagmata* and the *numeri* gather in the Tribunal of the Nineteen Couches, the patricians stand at the Onopodion, and members of the senate gather at the Portico of the Nineteen Couches. The empress is escorted to the Golden Hand by the emperor and her own entourage, but after reaching the Golden Hand

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Peter Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance in the Later Roman Empire," *Byzantion* 15 (1940-41): pp. 49-66; K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), V, pp. 439-454; I Goschew, "Zur Frage der Krönungszeremonien und die zeremonielle Gewandung der byzantinischen und der bulgarischen Herrscher im Mittelalter," *Byzantinobulgarica* 11 (1966): pp. 145-68; Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," ; Panayotis Yannopoulos, "Le couronnement de l'empereur à Byzance: rituel et fond institutionnel," *Byzantion* 61 (1991): pp. 71-92.

[37] Primary sources that provide information about the coronation of an empress are found in Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* I, ch. 40-41, pp. 202-216; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II ch. 49(40), 50(41), pp. 11-15, 16-23. Chapter 40 discusses only a coronation of either the wife or a daughter of the emperor, while Chapter 41 describes the coronation of an empress that immediately precedes her marriage. Chapter 38 of the *Book of Ceremonies* and the *Barberini Euchologion* dated to ca. 795 and the 12th century *Grotta Ferrata Euchologion* (cod. Cryp. ΓBI) provide further information about imperial coronations, and the *euchologia* also remark on some differences between the coronation of the emperor and empress; see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* I, ch. 38, pp. 191-196, and Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, ch. 47(38), pp. 1-5; the Grotta Ferrata text is published in Jacobus Goar, *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum* (Venice: 1730; reprint, Graz, 1960), pp. 726-730. The texts of the 8th and 12th century *euchologia* do not differ greatly from one another, indicating that the coronation ceremonial remained the same during the middle Byzantine period, see Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," p. 378 and Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," p. 67.

[38] See Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," p. 383 and Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," p. 72.

[39] The text of the patriarchal prayer during the coronation of an emperor in the 12th century is found in Goar, *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum* , p. 726, and this text probably goes back to earlier coronation prayers, for this view see Yannopoulos, "Le couronnement de l'empereur à Byzance: rituel et fond institutionnel," , p. 74, n. 14.

the emperor departs, and the empress is escorted to the terrace of the tribunal while the patricians fall to the ground in obeisance. Upon the appearance of the empress the factions begin their salutes and the empress takes candles, lights them and places them in front of the cross, while other imperial insignia are on display on the terrace, such as scepters and *labara* in clear view of all participants. As the acclamations continue the empress bows to the two sides of the terrace and then returns to the Augusteus Hall, while the factions chant: "This day is a joy and glory of the world on which the crown of the empire was placed on your head worthily. . . . Glory to God who made you empress. . . . Glory to God who crowned your head. . . . Him, who crowned you with his own hand, protect him in the purple for many years."[40] Then follow acclamations to the emperor, which also include references to the empress. Chapter 41 describes an identical ceremony but also adds further details: bishops and clerics also witness the empress' coronation, the patriarch recites a prayer not only over the crown but also over the *chlamys* during which prayer the empress, who was introduced by the *praepositus* holds two candles, which she later hands to the *primicer* and *ostiarios*. After the emperors take off the empress's *maphorion*, they hand it to the *cubicularioi* who encircle her body with it while the patriarch hands the *chlamys* to the emperors who drape it around the empress and fasten it over her shoulder. The patriarch prays over the crown and the pendilia that he hands over to the emperor separately, who places the crown on the head of the empress and hangs the pendilia from it. When the empress goes to the terrace of the Tribunal of the Nineteen Couches wives of senators are also present in the crowd.

The coronation of Byzantine emperors (by the patriarch) does not appear to be a constitutional necessity,[41] for it was not the coronation that created the emperor. Yet it provided an exalted spectacle in which the position of the emperor could be reaffirmed, articulating his relationship with the patriarch as well as with his court and the people of

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[40] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* I, ch. 40, p. 206; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II ch. 49(40), p. 14; Appendix B, no. 12.

[41] Scholars have debated the significance of imperial coronations for decades, some vehemently arguing that the coronation was an absolute necessity for becoming an emperor, others defending the opposite point of view. I agree with the conclusions of Anastos, who argued persuasively that the coronation of the emperor by the patriarch was not a constitutional necessity but rather a liturgical event, Anastos, "The Coronation of Emperor Michael IV in 1034 by Empress Zoe and its Significance." For a summary of the debate, see ibid, p. 37, no. 2 and Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," pp. 84-89.

Constantinople, and as Anastos pointed out, coronation by the patriarch also underscored the divine election of the emperor.[42] Baynes put it aptly when he suggested that the coronation was "a declaratory rite – a rite not obligatory but hallowed by custom. It gives expression to the Byzantine conviction 'how fair a rule is monarchy with God for guide,' as Geroge of Pisidia, the seventh century Poet Laureate, wrote."[43] Nelson emphasized that both emperor and patriarch performed the act of coronation, which in her view highlights that both emperor and patriarch had a position in Byzantine society that was peculiar in that they had both clerical and political elements,[44] and suggested that in Byzantium the coronation "constituted instead a recognition that the chosen emperor was already qualified. . . . it was a static representation of a pre-existing fact, an articulated icon."[45] Empresses, like most junior emperors, were crowned by the senior emperor.[46] Although the patriarch blessed the insignia with which they were vested, their coronation did not take place in Hagia Sophia but in the Augusteon Hall (whereas junior emperors were crowned in the hippodrome or Hagia Sophia). The exchanging of the maphorion of the empress for the imperial chlamys is a significant element of the coronation ceremonial: it articulates visually her transition from a mortal woman to a sacred imperial being where her gender is eclipsed by her imperial aura. While coronation did not create a monarch, it endowed or made publicly visible an inalienable quality or charisma of the crowned person.[47] And while there is no mistaking the authority and position of the empress and emperor in Byzantium, the acclamations accompanying the marriage and coronation of the empress emphasized the divine origins of her position and authority,

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[42] Anastos, "The Coronation of Emperor Michael IV in 1034 by Empress Zoe and its Significance," p. 36.
[43] Norman Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: 1955), pp. 34-5.
[44] Janet L. Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byznatium and the West in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: 1976), pp. 97-119, especially 106-107.
[45] Ibid. , p. 109.
[46] Although the senior emperor sometimes delegated this to the patriarch, see ibid. , p. 98, n. 7.
[47] Yannopoulos, "Le couronnement de l'empereur à Byzance: rituel et fond institutionnel," p. 81. Also see Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byznatium and the West in the Early Middle Ages," p. 99. "La signification du couronnement etait donc plutot institutionnelle que constituante de la fonction imperiale. Il ne conferait pas un pouvoir ou une fonction, mais il reconnaissati un pouvoir et l'exercice d'une fonction en leur cenferant la couverture de la protection divine, qui a Byznace consitutait la forme supreme de legitimite." Yannopoulos, "Le couronnement de l'empereur à Byzance: rituel et fond institutionnel," p. 82.

and suggested that her selection in marriage and her coronation were carried out directly "by the hand of God."[48]

Birth of an Imperial Heir

The empress played a less significant part in the ceremonials[49] that surrounded the birth of a male heir due to the restrictions surrounding childbirth, which was considered an impure state, and due to the fact that the protagonist of the events was the new-born rather than his mother.[50] The Porphyra, the chamber where the empress gave birth to her son, was decorated on the eighth day following the birth with golden tapestries from the Chrysotriklinos and with chandeliers and the newborn was brought to his mother and laid down in his crib, and both the mother and child were wrapped with golden cloths when the archons and the rest of the staff of her chamber were brought in. This was followed by the appearance of the various female courtiers who made obeisance and delivered congratulations and gifts to the new mother and child, followed by the visit of male dignitaries of the court.[51] This visit to the chamber of the empress, however, was

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[48] The notion of the divine election of empress was also articulated in other Byzantine texts. See for example *Life of Theophano*, ch. 6, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," , p. 4/3-21; or *Vita Basilii* about Eudokia Ingerina, A. Vogt and S. I. Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basil I par son fils Léon le sage," *Orientalia Christiana* 26 (1932): pp. 5-79, especially pp. 53-55; *Life of Theodora* describes how she receives an apple from St. Isaiah prophesying her coronation, Martha Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 31-60, especially p. 36. Sometimes prophecies were manufactured during the lifetimes of emperors and empresses to serve as tools of legitimizations. For instance, Theophanes Confessor recorded an inscription "discovered" in 780/1 along the Long Walls of Thrace that stated: "Christ will be born of the Virgin Mary and I believe in Him. O sun, you will see me again in the reign of Constantine and Irene." See Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , p. 627. Mango has established convincingly that this inscription was a forgery created for political purposes in the first year of Irene's joint rule with her young son, Constantine VI. The fictitious prophecy clearly attempts to legitimize the widowed Irene's reign as a regent mother by drawing attention to an alleged ancient source. Mango also drew attention to the fact that the finding of this inscription happened the same year when the relics of St. Euphemia were allegedly rediscovered and brought back to Constantinople. This was yet another device that helped to legitimize Irene's regency, see Cyril Mango, "A Forged Inscription of the Year 781," *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloshkog Instituta* 8/1 (1963): pp. 201-07.

[49] See Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, chapter 21, pp. 615-619. Also see Gilbert Dagron, "Nés dans la pourpre," *Travaux et mémoirs* 12 (1994): pp. 105-42.

[50] For a discussion of the perception of newborns in Byzantium, see Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "Regards sur l'enfant nouveau-né à Byzance," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 51 (1993): pp. 161-76.

[51] See Maguire's essay in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 190-191.

preceded by seven days of various celebrations and acclamations that included prayers of the patriarch on behalf of the newborn, acclamations by the senate, receptions in the palace, acclamations of the newborn and races at the hippodrome, and during the week of the celebration of the birth beverages and cakes were served to members of the faction and the military in the palace, and to the populace at the Mese, by the Chalke Gate, and the Forum Bovis, thus directly or indirectly the whole populace participated in the celebration of the birth of an imperial heir.[52]

The Empress in the Ceremonial Life of the Court

The empress's role in the ceremonial life of the court had two aspects: as imperial consort she participated in ceremonies by the side of the emperor, and as head of the Court of Women (*sekreton ton gynaikon*) she was the focus of rituals involving female members of the court (and city) to provide a parallel to the male counterpart of the ceremonial lead by the emperor.[53] The double role of the empress as imperial wife and

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[52] See Dagron, "Nés dans la pourpre," , pp. 119-121; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 45-46; Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung in höfischen Zeremoniell* , pp. 108-110.

[53] The *sekreton ton gynaikon* included the wives of imperial office holders, the under-aged imperial children, and eunuch officials. For the *sekreton ton gynaikon*, see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, 40, p. 203; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, p. 12. Male officials in the service of the empress were the four *silentiaries*, whose duty was "to act as marshals at imperial audiences", the *primicerius* and the *praepositus* of her bedchamber, the master of the Augusta's table (*ho epi tes trapezdes tes augustes)*, and the *pincernes.* For the *silentiary*, see Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 25 and Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, 86, p. 389; for the eunuch *primicerius*, see Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 122; for the eunuch *praepositus*, see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, 21, p. 123; for the master of the table see, Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 126; for the *pincernes* see Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 128 and Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* (Paris: 1972), p. 306. A. Moffatt drew attention to references to female dignitaries associated with the empress mentioned in the *Book of Ceremonies*, see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I,9, pp. 67-68; I,49, p. 203; II,15, p. 596, II,21, p. 618; Ann Moffatt, "Variations in Byzantine Imperial Ceremonial: The *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogennetos," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 24 (1997): pp. 219-27, especially p. 223. However, one must admit, that the evidence for the women's court is limited; it is not often mentioned in texts. Anne L. McClanan, "Ritual and Representation of the Byzantine Empress' Court at San Vitale, Ravenna" (Radovi XIII. medunarodnog kongresa za starokršcansku arheologiju : Split-Porec, Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae 1994, (Split - Porec, 1998), pp. 11-20, analyzed the representation of Theodora in San Vitale as a representation of the *sekreton ton gynaikon.*

head of the women's court is clearly shown by the narrative recounting the triumphal entry of Theophilos to Constantinople in 831/837:

> . . . when he had arrived at Hiereia, the Augousta along with the emperor's representative, the magistros, the Eparch of the City, and all the senate of the City, came out, leaving the officers of the tagmata to guard the City. The senate met the emperor at a short distance from his reaching the palace and, falling to the ground, they paid him homage. The Augousta met him within the railing of the low Triklinon when he had dismounted form his horse and, paying homage, she kissed him. The emperor ordered that the senate should accompany him in conformity with the order of a formal procession to the Hiereia, and remain seven days, until the fettered Hagarene prisoners-of-war should arrive. He ordered also that the wives of the senators, having left the City, should proceed thither with the Augousta.[54]

The empress came to greet the emperor upon his return to Constantinople together with the official delegation of the emperor's deputies. The first event following the emperor's *adventus*, the public kiss of the imperial couple proclaimed that the imperial hierarchy was again complete – the emperor was yet again present in his city – and also served as a symbolic embrace between the victorious ruler returning home and his faithful city awaiting his arrival. Once the emperor re-assumed his position, the empress took on her second role as the head of the female court leading the senatorial wives who participated in the victory ceremonials.[55] The *Book of Ceremonies* also records that the empress is praised during acclamations performed at the celebration of triumphs, thus she also partakes in the glory of the military victory.[56]

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[54] Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. Herbert Hunger, trans. John F. Haldon, vol. XXVIII, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Vienna: 1990), pp. 146-147. For the controversy of dating this triumph, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 146, n. 51.

[55] Unfortunately, the empress's presence is not attested in the later triumph of Basil I recorded in the same military treatise.

[56] A now lost mosaic of the Bronze Gate of the imperial palace also indicates that the empress Theodora, the infamous wife of Justinian, also partook in the glory of a triumph in the early Byzantine period. On this mosaic emperor and empress together received the victorious general Belisarius who brought home a triumph on behalf of the imperial couple: "The emperor is victorious through his lieutenant, the general Belisarius, who returns to the emperor, his whole army intact, and offers him booty, namely kings and kingdoms and all other things that are prized by men. In the center stand the emperor and the empress Theodora, both seeming to rejoice as they celebrate their victory over the kings of the Vandals and the Goths, who approach them as captives of war being led into bondage. They are surrounded by the Roman Senate, one and all in festive moods." Procopius, De aedificiis I, X, in J. Haury, ed., *Procopii Caesariensis*

The empress and the court of women often celebrated religious feasts separately from the male court, since the sexes were segregated during the liturgy in the Byzantine church, although this was a tendency rather than an absolute rule.[57] Moreover, religious ceremonies could not give the empress center stage, for they articulated a different type of 'couplehood' in the exercise of Byzantine authority, that of the patriarch and the emperor, who frequently embraced and kissed at the beginning and end of religious ceremonials, signaling the harmony of spiritual and secular leaderships.[58] The *Book of Ceremonies* records a few occasions when the empress led separate rituals from that of the emperor during church feasts. In the course of the celebration of the Pentecost liturgy, the empress, in the presence of eunuch officials, gave the kiss of peace to women courtiers who appeared in hierarchical order at her *metatorion* in the gallery of Hagia Sophia, while the emperor embraced and kissed male members of the court.[59] On Palm Sunday, the empress received church officials after the emperor dismissed them who presented her with crosses.[60] A late 7th century western traveler also reports about the segregation in the ceremonial of the male and female courts, and men and women of Constantinople during the celebration of Easter. The emperor began the adoration of the cross on Holy Thursday, while the empress, her court, and the women of the populace preformed their veneration on Good Friday.[61]

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opera (Leipzig: 1913), III,2; for English translation see Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 109.

[57] For a discussion of women's space inside the church in Byzantium, see Robert F. Taft, S.J., "Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When - and Why?," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): pp. 27-87.

[58] It is important to keep in mind, that a neat division between spiritual and secular authority cannot be observed in Byzantine ideology. The emperor was the elect of God and thus his power was divinely sanctioned, moreover, the emperor had the right to convoke and preside over church councils, he appointed the patriarch, and also had the right to enter the sanctuary. For the authority exercised by emperor and patriarch, see Nicol, "Byzantine Political Thought," , pp. 68-73. Nicol cites a passage from the History of Leo the Deacon attributed to the emperor John Tzimiskes (969-976): "... the power of the priesthood and that of the kingship, the one entrusted by the Creator with the cure of the souls and the other with the government of bodies." Ibid, 69. For a discussion and translation of the same passage, see Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 96-97; also see the comments of Tsirpanlis, "The Imperial Coronation and Theory in "De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae" of Constantine Porphyrogennitus," , p. 89.

[59] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 9, p. 67; also see Moffatt, "Variations in Byzantine Imperial Ceremonial: The *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogennetos," p. 224.

[60] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 32, p. 176; also see ibid., p. 225.

[61] "First of all the Emperor of the world kisses it with bent face, then one going up after another in the order of rank or age, all kiss the Cross with honor. Then on the next day, that is, on the sixth day of the week before Easter, the Queen, the matrons, and all the women of the people, approach it in the above-mentioned

It is not quite clear from the evidence whether the empress accompanied the emperor during religious processions or whether she led her own processions, or possibly it varied from occasion to occasion.[62] The chronicler Theophanes reports an occasion when the empresses proceeded alone during a religious ceremonial:

> On the 25th of the month of December [of 718/9] Leo's wife Maria was crowned in the Augusteus hall and solemnly processed alone to the great church, without her husband. After praying in front of the sanctuary doors, she went over to the Great Baptistery, which her husband had entered earlier with a few members of his household. ... After the holy liturgy, the Augusta Maria returned in procession with her baptized son and distributed largess on her way from the church to the Bronze Gate of the palace.[63]

Theophanes makes a point to emphasize that the empress processed alone on this occasion, which might indicate that this was unusual.[64] Yet, the Ceremonial Book describes that after the coronation of the empress was completed, the emperor did not accompany her to receive the acclamations from courtiers and factions, which may indicate that it was normal for a newly crowned empress to process alone.

Because of the double role of the empress as imperial consort and head of the women's court, it is not entirely clear to what extent and in exactly what capacity she participated in many of the other recorded rituals. For instance, Kazhdan and McCormick concluded that the empress conducted her public life mostly independently

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order and kiss it with all reverence. On the third day, that is, on [the day of] the Paschal Sabbath, the bishop and all the clergy after him approach in order, with fear and trembling and all honor, kissing the Cross of Victory, which is placed in its chest. When these sacred and joyful kissings of the Sacred Cross are finished, that venerable chest is closed, and with its honoured treasure is borne back to its ambry." This is reported in Adomnan's *De locis sanctis* written c. 680, for its English translation see James Rose McPherson, *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land about the year 680* (London: 1895), available at http://www.uscolo.edu/history/seminar/arculf.htm.

[62] A further occasion of segregation is attested by an anonymous English pilgrim in the 11th century, who states that in the Tuesday procession of the Hodegetria icon the men walked in the front while the women followed in the back. There is, however, no reference to the emperors in this text. "Et cum ista imagine Dei genetricis faciunt processionem omni die Martis per totam civitatem cum magno honore et canticis et hymnis. Multi enim populi ambulant cum ea, masculi in antea et femine retro." See Krijnie N. Ciggaar, "Une description de Constantinople traduite par un pèlerin anglais," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 34 (1976): pp. 211-67, ch. 4/7-9, pp. 249; for the date of the text, see ibid, pp. 216-217, 224.

[63] Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , A. M. 6211. Unfortunately the *Book of Ceremonies* does not mention the empress in its description of the baptism of an imperial heir, nor does it indicate how the youngster arrived to the baptistery, see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, ch. 22, pp. 619-620.

[64] I assume that "alone" does not mean that the empress was literally by herself – her ladies in waiting and other staff must have been about her – but that she did not accompany her husband.

of the emperor as head of the female court, while James remarked that it is possible that the reason why we have relatively little textual evidence for the ceremonial actions of the empress may be due to the frequent use of the word 'emperors' in the masculine plural in the texts, which obscures the empress even if she was present.[65] Often the empress was probably not listed separately because her participation was a matter of course. The acclamations recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* may support this view since the empress was acclaimed with the emperor on many occasions.

The factions, professional cheerleading squads of imperial ceremonials, acclaimed the empress frequently and with fervor in a variety of contexts: at receptions following religious feasts, imperial ceremonials, promotions of officials, imperial banquets, triumphs, and races at the hippodrome.[66] Acclamations lost the spontaneity that they had in the late antique period when they served to register the people's reactions to the emperor's actions[67] for by the 9-10th centuries they were composed by professional poets

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[65] See Kazhdan and McCormick, "The Social World of the Byzantine Court," , pp. 182-183; Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press: 2001), p. 50. The term despotai is used most often but basileis is also found on occasion in the *Book of Ceremonies*.

[66] For acclamations see ODB I, p. 10; RAC I, pp. 216-234. Also see McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West* , pp. 223-225. Acclamations to the empress are recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* for the following occasions: Feast of Nativity, Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , ch. 2, pp. 30, 32; Epiphany, ibid, ch. 3, p. 36; Easter, ibid, ch. 4, p. 39; Monday after Easter, ibid, ch. 5, pp. 41-42; Pentecost, ibid, ch. 9, p. 56; coronation of an emperor, ibid, II, ch. 47, pp. 4, 5; marriage of an emperor, ibid, II, ch. 48, pp. 9-10; coronation of an empress, ibid, ch. 49, II, pp. 11-15; birth of an imperial son, ibid, II, ch. 51, pp. 24-25; promotion of a Caesar, ibid, II, ch. 52, p. 31; promotion of a nobilissimos, ibid, II, ch. 53, p. 35; promotion of a patrician, ibid, II, ch. 57, p. 58; promotion of the eparch, ibid, II, ch. 61, p. 71; night before imperial feast, ibid, II, ch. 71, 88-89; imperial feast, ibid, II, ch. 72, 91-92; reception at the hippodrome on Easter Monday, ibid, II, ch. 73, p. 100; imperial feast, ibid, II, ch. 74, 103-104; receptions at the hippodrome, ibid, II, ch. 78, 122, 126, 128, 132, 135, 136; further receptions at the hippodrome, ibid, II, ch. 80, 151, 152, 155, 156, 157, 159; carneval, ibid, II, ch. 82, 167-68; victory celebration, ibid, II, ch. 86, p. 174; promotion of demarch, ibid, II, ch. 89, p. 178; Broumalia, Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, ch. 18, p. 603; birth of an imperial son, ibid, II, ch. 21, 615-619; promotion of cubicularia, ibid, II, ch. 24, 622-624.

[67] That acclamations of at least the military still had the power of making or breaking an imperial reign in the eighth century is demonstrated by the events that followed Irene's demand of an oath of allegiance from the military in the summer of 790. As Theophanes reports: "She started to impose the following oath on the army, 'As long as you are alive we shall not suffer your son to rule.' Everyone swore those words and no one at all dared to object." That is, not until Irene's directive reached the army of the Armeniac theme. "The latter did not consent to swear, 'We shall not be ruled by your son as long as you are alive', saying 'We shall not even place the name of Irene before that of Constantine, but shall keep Constantine and Irene as we have accepted at the beginning.' ... and they acclaimed Constantine as sole emperor. When the men of the other themata had heard of this, they expelled their strategoi and they, too, proclaimed Constantine as sole emperor." See Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , A.M. 6283. Theophanes' anecdote makes it clear that in the eighth century acclamations were still perceived as a fundamental and constitutive part of the political process, and they had an agency – if the acclamation was

who wrote occasional texts for particular imperial events.[68] Many of these acclamations, worded in the most flattering terms, survive in the *Book of Ceremonies*. As McCormick argued, these texts were written and sung under the supervision of a high official of the court, the *praepositus,* thus clearly they register imperial ideology.[69] And it is in these texts where the role of the empress was put into words, even if ever so briefly.[70] The acclamations referred to the empress regularly in praising the emperor: "Many years to you and the empresses and the purple born children;"[71] or "Lord, save the emperor with the empresses and with the purple-born children."[72] Sometimes the factions addressed the empress directly, as for example during her coronation ceremonial, praising her divine election and indicating that an empress was necessary for maintaining the desired order of the Byzantine state.[73] The empress is usually mentioned after the emperor and before or together with the purple-born children, thus presenting her wifely and maternal roles as central for the welfare of the empire. Some acclamations addressed the empress directly, and hence they probably attest that she was in attendance at the particular ceremonial where such speeches were pronounced. Most acclamations, however, address the emperor, and the empress is mentioned as an indispensable ornament in the praise to the emperor. Thus acclamations can only evidence the actual physical presence of the empress in a handful of ceremonials, where she was addressed directly, although it is tempting to think that she was present at more celebrations than is usually assumed. Nevertheless, it is clear that she occupied an important position in the mental landscape of imperial ideology, for as far as ceremonials were concerned, the emperor was rarely thought about without the mention of the empress. The empress was held up as a mirror to reflect back the glory of the emperor and enhance it with her own

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denied the legitimacy of the emperor's authority was questioned which directly lead to contestation of his, or as in this case, her power.

[68] For a discussion of the role of late antique factions see Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); for acclamations see ibid. pp. 142, 231-232, 241, 245, and McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West*, pp. 223-225.

[69] McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West*, pp. 223-225; also see ODB I, pp. 10-11.

[70] For more discussion of acclamations praising the empress, see Chapter VIII.

[71] Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, I, ch. 2, p. 30.

[72] Ibid., II/72, p. 91-92.

[73] See for example, ibid., II/72, p. 91-92.

radiance. Her radiance in part derived from the exulted charisma of the emperor, yet she also had an innate brilliance as the elect of God.

Texts recording imperial banquets also provide a somewhat ambiguous picture about the role of the empress during these events.[74] Two officials of the court of the empress had duties specifically relating to banqueting: the master of the Augusta's table *(ho epi tes trapezdes tes augustes)*, who was also responsible for the barges of the empress;[75] and the *pincernes*, who was in charge of a special wine for the empress's table.[76] The *Book of Ceremonies* also mentions briefly that banquets given by the empress followed the same order as those given by the emperor, yet the text offers no further information about how they might have unfolded, nor do we posses a list of invited guests, as we do for the table of the emperor.[77] There is, however, some evidence that indicates that even though the empress had her own table and dining officials, she also participated in banquets at the side of the emperor. The information about the second highest female rank in the Byzantine court in this period, the *zoste patrikia* (mistress of the robes) provides indirect evidence. This title was first attested in the ninth century, when the mother-in-law of the emperor Theophilos received it,[78] and was last

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[74] Although canon law did not prohibit women from dining with men as long as they did not participate in *symposiai*, there is evidence that indicates that segregation of women was desirable, although not always enforceable. See Evelyne Patlagean, "Byzantium in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in *A History of Private Life. From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. Paul Veyne (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 551-641, especially pp. 573-574.

[75] Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 126. Evidence from time of Basil I indicates that this official was not necessarily a eunuch. Regarding this official, *De Administrando Imperio* states that, "But the barges of the Augusta, both scarlet and black, were beneath the hand and the supervision of the master of the Augusta's table, though of course the master of the table accounted for these barges not to the Augusta, but to the emperor." Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, trans. ed. Gyula Moravcsik and trsl. Romili J. H. Jenkins, vol. I, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), p. 249.

[76] The *pincernes* was a eunuch official. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 128; Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* , p. 306.

[77] Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II/74, pp. 103-104. For the list of guests for the emperor's table see the *Kletorologion of Philotheos*, ca. 899, published by Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* and Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* .

[78] Bury mentions that the date for the establishment of this title is unclear and he dates the description of the investment of the *zoste patrikia* in the *Book of Ceremonies*, chapter I/50, to the reign of Michael II and Theophilos. For a mention of Theoktiste as *zoste patrikia* see I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), III, ch. 5, p. 90. A seal of Theoktiste is found in the Basel Zacos Collection and was published by Zacos-Veglery and Okonomides, see G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel: 1972), II, no. 1083 and Nicolas Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986), no. 48. The inscription of this seal states: *(Theo)ktistes zostes patri(kias) kai meter tes basileises.* For a discussion of the office of the *zoste patrikia*

mentioned in the eleventh century.[79] The *zoste patrikia* was the only female official who was included on the list of invited guests to imperial banquets, as indicated by the *Keltorologion of Philotheos* from 899.[80] Since the *zoste patrikia* was invited and had the privilege to sit at the emperor's table, one may conclude that she was present to provide female company for the empress, for all the other invited guests to such feasts were usually male. Some historical sources also record, that Eudokia Ingerina, the wife of the junior emperor Basil I, was present at the dinner at which Michael III was assassinated on 23 September 867.[81] There are however, two problems with the sources that describe this particular meal: on the one hand the dinner appears to be a private event, and on the other hand, one may question that the seven month pregnant Eudokia was indeed present on this occasion, since the evidence survives in texts that are highly antagonistic towards the Macedonian dynasty. We are also informed that Zoe Carbonopsina, the fourth wife of Leo VI had participated in a meal at which the patriarch was also present.[82] There is, nonetheless, other supportive evidence for the presence of the empress at banquets, which may be culled from the acclamations recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* associated with preparations for and celebrations of imperial banquets. Thus on the day before the banquet that celebrates the anniversary of the accession of the emperor a reception is held

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see: A. Vogt, "Histoire des institutions: note sur la patricienne à ceinture," *Échos d'Orient* 37 (1938): pp. 352-56; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , Commentaire II, pp. 72-74; R. Guilland, "Patricienne à ceinture," *Byzantinoslavica* 32 (1971): pp. 269-75.

[79] Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* , p. 293, no. 33. This was the only female rank, aside from the rank of the empress and *cubicularia*, which was bestowed upon its recipient in the course of a public ceremonial at court. All other female titles were given to wives of court officials at their homes following the public ceremonies when their husbands received their title directly from the emperor. The evidence indicates that the wives of such office holders did not participate in the promotion ceremonial of their husbands at court but were waiting at home for the conclusion of the ceremonial where they themselves would receive the codicils of their female rank matching that of their husband's.

[80] Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* , p. 33; Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* , p. 293, n. 33.

[81] See Patlagean, "Byzantium in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," , p. 574. For the date, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers Universty Press, 1957), p. 232. Eudokia is described as enjoying herself with Michael in the Symeon Logothete sources, e.g. I. Bekker, *Leo Grammaticus* (Bonn: 1842), pp. 250-251, which are typically anti-Macedonian in attitude. The pro-Macedonian sources, e.g. I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), p. 210, 7-13 does not mention the participation of Eudokia on the night of Michael's murder. Kislinger drew attention to the fact that Eudokia was seven months pregnant with Stephen, who was born in December 867, at the time of Michael's assassination. For references to all sources that describe the circumstances of the fateful night, see Ewald Kislinger, "Eudokia Ingerina, Basileios I, und Michael III," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 33 (1983): pp. 119-36, 132-134.

[82] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , p. 267, n. 53.

in which the factions acclaim the empress several times, praising her elevation to the throne, and addressing her directly on one occasion suggesting that she was present.[83] During a reception on the day of the banquet, the empress is again addressed directly by the factions praising her anointment by God.[84] At the dinner the empresses are praised as follows: "... the emperors are illustrious, (and) the world rejoices, the empresses are illustrious, (and) the world rejoices, the purple born children also, (and) the world rejoices ... Empresses, our joy and our riches, yes Lord, many years to them."[85]

There is, however, more extensive information about a series of receptions and banquets recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* on the occasion of the visit of the Kievan princess Olga to Constantinople in 959. The emperor received Olga and her whole retinue, male and female members alike, in the Magnaura palace. It is not specified whether the empress was present; however, it is possible that she was not since after this reception, another followed in the Triclinium of Justinian in which the empress and her daughter-in-law, seated on golden thrones and surrounded by the various ranks of the Court of Women, received Olga and her female relatives and attendants. After some rest following the encounter with the empress's court, Olga was invited to meet the imperial family in a more intimate setting: "Then the emperor set with the empress and his children born in purple, and the princess was summoned from the Kainourgios; and at the emperor's bidding she set and conversed about all she wished with the emperor."[86] Later the same day two lavish banquets took place, feasts for all senses; while savoring the meal, the ear was pleased by choirs extolling the virtues of the emperors and the eye was delighted with theatrical displays. One was held in the Triclinium of Justinian headed by the empress and her daugther-in-law with Olga and the Court of Women in attendance, the other in the Chrysotriklinos, where the emperor and his court entertained Olga's male

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[83] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 62, pp. 278-280; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, ch. 71(62), pp. 88-89.
[84] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 63, p. 281; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, ch. 72(63), pp. 91-92.
[85] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 65, p. 295; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, ch. 74(65), pp. 103-104.
[86] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, ch. 15, p. 596; translated by Jeffrey Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1990): pp. 293-312, especially p. 304.

relatives and other officials and merchants of the Russian embassy. At the conclusion of the meal the emperor joined the ladies and his children for dessert:

> When the emperor rose from the banquet, a dessert was served in the Aristeterion, and the small golden table from the Pentapyrgion was set out, and upon it the dessert was served in enameled bowls encrusted with precious stones. And there sat the emperor, as well as Romanus, the emperor born in the purple, and their children born in the purple and the daughter-in-law and the princess. . . [87]

Thus, during Olga's visit a separation of male and female ceremonials was observed on more formal occasions. Olga's embassy, however, was exceptional; this is a unique occasion on which the Byzantine court entertained a female foreign head of state. Embassies did not typically include women, but Olga traveled with a large entourage of female folk, which necessitated an appropriate reception in the Byzantine court with the active participation of women.[88] Olga also had the privilege to consort with the whole imperial family, including women and children, in more intimate settings. That Olga was given extraordinary hospitality is also indicated by the fact that she and her retinue may have lodged in the Kainourgion palace, near the empress's quarter, during her entire visit.[89] Featherstone suggested that none of the other embassies recorded in the same chapter of the *Book of Ceremonies* were given access to the more private spaces of the imperial palace the same way Olga was, perhaps because they were not from Christian, but from Islamic courts.[90] Unfortunately, none of the reports of the other embassies mention the participation of the empress. Yet, other sources indicate that the Umayyad court poet Yahya al-Ghazzal, envoy of Abd al-Rahman II to Theophilus' court in 839-

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[87] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, ch. 15, pp. 597-598; translated by Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople," , pp. 304-05.

[88] That the arrival of a prominent woman required the participation of the wives of the elite is also indicated by the report given by Theophanes of the arrival of Irene, the fiancé of the junior emperor Leo IV, from Athens to Constantinople in 769, see Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , A.M. 6261. Four or six centuries later the reception of a bride, in this case a foreign bride from the West, is depicted in a manuscript, which shows and describes the reception of the bride by seventy women of the court, and her greeting by her future sister-in-law, in Vatican gr. 1851, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 210-230.

[89] As suggested by Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople," , p. 308, n. 25.

[90] Ibid. It has been suggested that Olga was baptized before this trip to Constantinople, although the evidence is controversial, see ODB III, p. 1523.

840 had several private audiences in the imperial court in which the empress also participated.[91] Thus Al-Ghazzal related:

> [Theodora entered] . . . dressed in all her finery – a rising sun in beauty. Al-Ghazzal was so surprised that he could not take his eyes from her; and although the king was talking to him at the time, Al-ghazzal paid no attention to what he said. The king, finding Al-Ghazzal's behavior very rude, directed the interpreter to ask him what he was about. Al-Ghazzal said to him, " Tell thy master, that I am so captivated by the charms of this queen that I am prevented from listening. Say that I never saw in my life a handsomer woman than she is. He then began to describe one by one all her charms, and to paint his amazement at her incomparable beauty, and concluded by saying that she had captivated him with her black eyes. When the interpreter repeated his words to the king, Yahya rose still higher in his favor, and the queen was delighted with his words.[92]

Al-Ghazzal's text suggests an intimate meeting between the envoy and the imperial couple, for on formal occasions the emperor and empress were already seated on their thrones when the visitors would be escorted into their presence. Theodora's casual appearance during the audience and the tone of the conversation indicate that the visit was similar to the intimate discussion Olga had with the imperial family. A lost manuscript, which according to Lévi-Provençal dates to the 9th century, whose text is included in the 11th century chronicle of Ibn Hayyan, records several other friendly interactions between Al-Ghazzal and Theodora.[93] It seems that intimate access to the

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[91] Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), p. 200; also see John H. Rosser, "Theophilus "the Unlucky" (829-842): A Study of the Tragic and Brilliant Reign of Byzantium's Last Iconoclastic Emperor" (Ph. D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1972), p. 256; J. B. Bury, *History of the Roman Empire from the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I (802-867)* (London: 1912), p. 83, no. 4.

[92] This text is preserved only in the historical work of the sixteenth century Al-makkari, who appears to have transcribed it from the original sources. Ahmad ibn Muhammad Makarri, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, trans. Pascual de Gayangos (London: 1840-1843), 1843, II, p. 115. The Cordovan embassy was also recorded in the eleventh century work of Ibn Hayyan, see E. Lévi-Provençal "Un échange d'ambassades entre Cordoue et Byzance au IXe siècle," *Byzantion* 12 (1937): pp. 1-24. For the embassy exchanged between Cordoba and Constantinople in 839-840, see Eduardo Manzano Moreno, "Byzantium and al-Andalus in the Ninth Century," in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive? Papers from the Thirthieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1996*, ed. Leslie Brubaker (Aldershot: Ashgate, Variorum, 1998), pp. 215-27, p. 220.

[93] Manzano Moreno, "Byzantium and al-Andalus in the Ninth Century," , p. 220; E. Lévi-Provençal "Un échange d'ambassades entre Cordoue et Byzance au IXe siècle," *Byzantion* 12 (1937): pp. 1-24, especially pp. 11-14. On one occasion the empress escorted her young son, Michael to pay a visit to the poet in order to enjoy a friendly conversation over wine, yet the poet refused to entertain them suggesting that drinking with him in his lodgings would not be appropriate for a young emperor. The text even contains a poem that commemorates this event. Two other conversations between Al-Ghazzal and Theodora are recorded: one

empress and the rest of the imperial family was a diplomatic tool that articulated the level of friendliness between the Byzantine emperor and the foreign ruler represented by his emissary, or expressed the importance of the embassy from the Byzantine point of view, rather than demarcated the division between the Christian and non-Christian realms. Thus, the Cordovan embassy was of great consequence for Theophilos, for he initiated it by sending his own envoy to the emir Abd al-Rahman II on a mission of peace.[94] Given the importance of the mission, one might be inclined to believe that the Arab poet met and conversed privately with the empress Theodora on several occasions, even if the specific circumstances of these encounters might be questioned.

Conclusion

This chapter explored how imperial ceremonials presented the empress to the gaze of the court and the populace based on surviving textual sources. The texts conjure up richly adorned and highly regulated visual spectacles that defined the identity of the empress or provided structure and definition for various social situations through her absence or presence.

The arrival ceremony of an imperial bride was staged in front of the whole populace and traversed a large part of the city from her point of entrance to the place; the imperial family and the elite had close access to the new arrival while the populace of the city most likely only participated as remote spectators. Women of the imperial court appear to have had a primary role in preparing the empress-to-be for her new role by greeting her and dressing her into imperial garments so that she may be displayed to the court and the city in a clearly understandable Byzantine visual idiom; her newly acquired dress and the ceremonials surrounding her arrival gave clear visual expression to her rank within the imperial hierarchy in an immediate and public display. One of the texts, the Vatican *epithalamion*, even goes so far as to suggest that the greeting of the arriving princess by her future sister-in-law clearly articulated the new power relationship into

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about circumcision practiced by the Arabs, and the other about the poverty and homeliness of Al-Ghazzal's daughters upon which the empress presented one of her priceless necklaces to the poet.

[94] For a discussion of the mission, see ibid. , pp. 221-226.

which the princess arrived, as she was to be ranked higher than her Byzantine sister-in-law. The arrival ceremony served as an introduction to the court and populace of a new member of the imperial family while it also instantly articulated the position of the new arrival within the imperial hierarchy.

The imperial marriage ceremony and the coronation of the empress both took place within the Great Palace in front of more restricted audiences which, however, still must have numbered in the hundreds if not the thousands, as it included members of the clergy, imperial office holders and their wives, and the corps of the four factions. While no part of the ceremonials was staged outside the palace and thus a certain distance was maintained from the citizens perhaps in order to underscore the lofty character of the sacred imperial union, the people at large were informed about the imperial marriage and they also celebrated throughout the city. In the case of the empress' coronation her secondary position behind the emperor was articulated by the less public ceremonial and by the fact that her crowning was performed by the emperor rather than the patriarch. The marriage and coronation ceremonials unfolded as a series of appearances in the various halls and porticoes of the Great Palace in the course of which all members of the court paid respect to the new imperial union or the newly crowned empress. During the marriage ceremonial the physical aspects of the marriage were also celebrated by a great number of witnesses who sang panegyrics in the nuptial chamber exhorting the couple to their conjugal union, and sang praises while the empress cleansed herself on the third day following her nuptials in the imperial baths. It is noteworthy that the acclamations that accompany the coronation of the empress emphasized her divine election and coronation by the hand of God creating a tension or dichotomy between what was communicated through actions and through words.

The role of the empresses in the ceremonials surrounding the birth of an imperial heir was severely restricted. Although the festivities lasted for several days, the empress remained in the room where she gave birth and received the greetings and obeisance of the members of the court only on the 8th day. Here she and the newborn were covered and surrounded by lavish imperial textiles (presumably this was necessary as the parturient empress was not fit to wear the heavy ceremonial robes a few days after giving

birth) and they were both displayed as a tableau to the visiting dignitaries and their wives in full imperial splendor. This dramatic presentation of the newborn and his mother underscored the sacred privilege of the imperial child.[95] Although the bedchamber was only visited by court dignitaries, through the other festivities that permeated the palace and the whole city both the elite and the *hoi poloi* became active participants in the celebration of the imperial offspring.

In other recorded ceremonials the empress fulfilled a double role either as consort of the emperor or as the head of the Court of Women. In the ceremonial of the *adventus* followed by an imperial triumph she acted out both of her roles, while during religious ceremonials she usually presided over her female court. The available textual evidence suggests that she may have participated in imperial ceremonials more frequently than usually assumed as attested by acclamations and the evidence regarding imperial banquets. An audience or direct access to the presence of the empress could also define the nature of diplomatic encounters with foreign embassies from the point of view of the Byzantines. Clearly, whether present or absent at particular imperial ceremonials, the empress was mentioned and praised regularly together with the emperor indicating that she was an integral part of what defined the imperial office and hierarchy from the point of view of courtiers.

The relationship between these spectacles and the surviving visual imagery is by no means direct. Few images survive from the middle Byzantine period that can be directly linked with documented imperial ceremonials; these include the late examples of the unique representation of the arrival of an imperial bride in the Vatican epithalamion from the twelfth or fourteenth century, and images of imperial marriages in the illuminated historical manuscript of John Skylitzes produced most likely in Southern Italy in the twelfth century. No representations of the Court of Women, or the empress enthroned by herself or by the side of the emperor,[96] or the empress as a mother of a newborn, or imperial processions or imperial banquets that included empresses come

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[95] See Dagron's comments about the significance of birth in the purple, Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium* , pp. 41-48.

[96] Although one must note, that the lost ninth century mosaic of the Kainourgion showed the emperor Basil I enthroned together with his wife, Eudokia Ingerina in the company of their children. This mosaic will be explored in Chapter IV.

down to us. Yet the highly regulated presentation of the empress as an embodiment and vision of the female aspect of the imperial office presented to spectators defined to a great extent the style of her visual representation. Allusions to the divine election of the empress, the imperial union and her coronation and her motherhood may be identified in the surviving visual imagery through more and less explicit visual means and/or through the help of texts accompanying the images. These connections between the living ceremonials and the surviving visual images will be explored in later chapters.

CHAPTER II: IMPERIAL IMAGE, IMPERIAL PORTRAIT

By modern standards the expression 'Byzantine portraiture' may seem an oxymoron. Indeed, if one applies the yardstick of ancient Roman portraiture, the tradition from which Byzantine portraiture emerges, Byzantine representations of individuals fall short in faithfully capturing the idiosyncratic features of a person's face; and when they are compared to Renaissance or post-Renaissance realistic portraits, they are found even more deficient, since neither do they represent the distinctive characteristics of the individual's face and body nor offer insight into the personality of the "sitter." Portraits of Byzantine rulers appear as anemic shadows due to their generic quality, emphatic two-dimensionality, and lifeless features.[1]

Representations of Middle Byzantine empresses are strikingly uniform both in style and iconography and were produced in two-dimensional media since no imperial images survive in the round dating after 610, and likely none were produced as indicated by the sharp decline in the number of imperial portrait statues created between the mid-fourth and the early seventh century.[2]

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[1] Smith emphasized the connection between the introduction of the diadem as a regular component of the imperial image beginning in the early fourth century and the immediate decline of the replication of imperial portraits based on centrally controlled prototypes. He remarked: "Close replication after a given 'identifying' type became rare after Constantine. With regular wearing of the diadem as an external badge of imperial office, the imperial image became immediately recognizable as the emperor's regardless of its physiognomical type." R. R. R. Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," *Journal of Roman Studies* LXXXVII (1997): pp. 170-202, especially p. 178.

[2] Rudolf H. W. Stichel, *Die RÖmische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike, Archaeologica 24* (Rome: 1982), pp. 5-37; R. R. R. Smith, "Roman Portraits: Honours, Empresses, and Late Emperors," *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): pp. 209-21, especially p. 216-218. Smith emphasizes that the production of statues for empresses declined at an even sharper date than those of emperors, see p. 218. It is noteworthy that the last mention of a public honorific statue of a non-imperial figure was the dedication of a statue of Niketas in 614, see ODB III, p. 1856. There is textual evidence for the possible existence of freestanding statues of four emperors after 610: that of Justinian II and Philippikus Bardanes in *Parastaseis* ch. 37, p. 82, and Irene in *Patria* III, ch. 202, Constantine VI in *Patria* II, ch. 56. The evidence as to the actual appearance of these images is somewhat contradictory and they come down in the *Parastaseis* and *Patria*, notoriously untrustworthy sources. For the *Parastaseis*, see Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden: 1984), pp. 96-99, 160-161, 210-211, 272; for the *Patria*, see Theodor Preger, ed., *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (New York: 1975), pp. 181-182, 278, and Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos, Poikila Byzantina 8* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1988), pp. 352, 549. For the interpretation and evaluation of these statues attested in these sources, see Cyril Mango,

Were there Portraits in Byzantium?

Nevertheless, the term portrait will be used in this dissertation, albeit in a minimalist sense, following Richard Brilliant's definition: ". . . portraits are art works, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience."[3] Brilliant also observed that by their nature, and regardless of their intended destination within the public or the private sphere, portraits are public images and as such are characterized by a strong sense of formality and a "heightened degree of self-composure,"[4] indisputably dominant characteristics of Byzantine portraits. Gombrich's remarks are also particularly relevant for an approach to Byzantine portraiture, as they underscore the important "relational" connection between sitter and image, and emphasize that this connection permits any degree of exactitude in rendering the physical features of the sitter:

> The correct portrait, like the useful image, is an end product on a long road through schema and correction. It is not a faithful record of a visual experience, but the faithful construction of a relational model. Neither the subjectivity of vision nor the sway of conventions need lead us to deny that such a model can be constructed to *any required degree of accuracy*. The form of a representation cannot be divorced from its purpose and the requirements of the society in which the given visual language gains currency.[5]

"Epigrammes honorifiques, statues et portraits à Byzance," in *Afieroma ston Niko Sborono, I* (Rethymno: University of Crete, 1986; reprint, Studies on Constantinople, no. IX), pp. 23-35, especially pp. 31-35.

[3] See Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: 1991), p. 8.

[4] Ibid. , p. 10. Breckenridge employs a narrower definition of portraiture, which he terms the "true portrait." He relies on the definition offered by Bernhard Schweitzer, who characterized "true portraits" as follows: "It must represent a definite person, either living or of the past, with is distinctive human traits. The person must be represented in such a manner that under no circumstances can his identity be confused with that of someone else. As a work of art, a portrait must render the personality, i.e. the inner individuality, of the person represented in his outer form." James D. Breckenridge, *Likeness. A Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* (Evanston, ILL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 8. To this Breckenridge adds: a portrait is a representation of an individual incorporating a "likeness in its most fully developed sense," and is an effigy created for its own sake rather than one that fulfills magical or funerary purposes, ibid, pp. 3-14. Thus, Byzantine representations of individuals would not fall within the category of "true portrait" as understood by Breckenridge.

[5] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: 1959), p. 90.

Portraits create meaning not only in capturing the likeness (be it external and/or internal) of an individual but also through the gap between what is perceived as the reality of the person and his or her representation in the image.

Henry Maguire offered a more specific definition of Byzantine portraits, although within the realm of representations of saints rather than emperors and empresses.[6] He argued that Byzantine viewers considered images of saints as recognizable, lifelike portraits despite their lack of optical illusionism,[7] suggesting that a sufficiently accurate "definition" of the image produced a fully satisfactory portrait whose efficacy would have been disturbed by a more extensive employment of illusionistic devices.[8] Accordingly, a satisfactory "definition" of an image is comprised of a clear indication of the gender, and class of the saint, as well as a competent rendering of his or her portrait type (if it is available), and attributes and inscriptions.[9] This understanding of Byzantine holy portraits may be applied to imperial portraits of the eighth through the eleventh centuries with the caveat that imperial representations infrequently show a single definable portrait type of specific emperors or empresses in the same way portrait types crystallized for popular saints, as exemplified for instance by images of St. John Chrysostom, who is typically shown with a triangular face surmounted by a wide, balding cranium, prominent ears, closely set eyes, haggard cheeks and a short beard – a physiognomy unmistakably recognizable as Chrysostom (Fig. 3).[10] Thus an imperial portrait is an image — not necessarily a recognizable likeness or even a portrait type — of a ruler (and/or members of his immediate family) who may be identified as a specific historical personage based on iconography (that specifies gender, imperial status, approximate age, and provides at the minimum a generalized representation of facial features) and an inscription giving further specificity about the individual (such as name,

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[6] Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[7] For a discussion of images of saints as portraits in Byzantium, also see ODB III, pp. 1702-3.
[8] See quotation from Theodore of Stoudios below regarding the mental process accompanying the painting of a life-like portrait, which also emphasizes that the incidental details should be overlooked in favor of finding the core that constitutes the individual who is being depicted, see note 21 below.
[9] Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies* , pp. 5-47.
[10] Chrysostom's portrait type was established by the 11th century; on representations of Chrysostom, see Otto Demus, "Two Palaeologan Mosaic Icons in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960): pp. 87-119.

title, etc.).[11] Therefore the constituent elements of a middle Byzantine imperial portrait are: some, usually limited degree of individuality (indicated by facial features, hairstyle and color, presence or absence of beard and its shape, relative heights, and inscription); highly generalized facial features; a body that is usually shown frontally completely subsumed by garments and represented as a stock motif; elaborate representation of imperial garments and regalia; and frequently the halo.

Visual Identity between Image and Emperor

Spatharakis examined Byzantine portraits that come down to us in illuminated manuscripts, and concluded that they attempt to convey a "genuine likeness" of the individual. However, he excluded representations that he calls "portraits of decorative character" from his discussion.[12] These "portraits of decorative character" are what one might call imaginary portraits that render the appearance of individuals with no or little accuracy since they deviate from descriptions or other extant images of the particular person. While the distinction between "genuine" and "decorative" likenesses may be clear to a modern scholar who has the corpus of published Byzantine artifacts at his fingertips along with a variety of historical sources, it is questionable that it should be applied to the approach of Byzantine art. A more flexible method is necessary for the study of Byzantine portraiture since the Byzantines themselves appear to have had a less rigid definition of what makes a valid representation of a historical personage than we do, as I will demonstrate below. Moreover, while in certain cases Spatharakis is right in suggesting that a recognizable likeness was developed for imperial figures and employed in different media, as for instance on representations of Michael VII shown in the Coislin 79 (Figs. 163-165), on the Holy Crown of Hungary, and on the Khakhouli Triptych (Fig. 141), or the images of Constantine IX depicted on the mosaic panel in Hagia Sophia (Fig.

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[11] Some other images that lack labels to accompany the imperial representation are also considered portraits here even if the identification of their figures with specific emperors and empresses is controversial, such as the ivory casket from the Palazzo Venezia, see Chapter V.

[12] Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), p. 254-258. He also excluded representations of the canonized empresses Theodora and Theophano depicted in the Vatican gr. 1613, presumably because he considered these images as representations of saints rather than portraits of individuals, for a discussion of these, see Chapter VII.

88), and in the Sinai gr. 364 (Fig. 160), this is by no means the case in all surviving representations.[13] For instance, when one compares the features of the empress Zoe shown on the mosaic panel in Hagia Sophia and in the Sinai gr. 364, the facial features are different enough that one might not recognize that the same individual is depicted without reading the inscribed name. Unlike in Roman art, where if one saw a coin of the emperor Vespasian, one would be able to recognize his representations in any other media without the need of an identifying inscription, and would never mistake one emperor for another, in Byzantium consistent portrait types that shared a series of unmistakably recognizable, idiosyncratic features of individual rulers across media were for the most part not produced (or have not survived). Thus, for instance the strikingly naturalistic effigy of Leo VI on his gold coins (Fig. 4) — such naturalism had been absent from Byzantine numismatic imagery for several centuries — shows a mature emperor with an elongated, narrow face, closely set eyes, long nose, and prominent protruding ears, shoulder length hair and long beard, a likeness that does not accord particularly well with Leo's representation on an ivory (Fig. 5) where he is rendered with an oval face, short-cropped beard, a bulbous nose, and short hair.[14] At the same time the long-haired and long-faced physiognomy of Leo VI from his gold coins is employed in virtually identical form on coins and ivory plaques rendering the features of his son, Constantine VII (Fig. 6), and is also used with little modification to represent the numismatic effigy of Romanos I (Fig. 7), a usurper who delayed the ultimate accession of Constantine VII by several decades and who was not related by blood to the imperial family. These examples demonstrate that while visual uniformity did not necessarily characterize the representations of the same emperor, a supra-individual pictorial consistency may exist in rendering the facial features of various emperors dictated by

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[13] Although the portrait of Michael VII in the Coislin 79 has undergone some changes in order to show his successor, Nikephoros Botaniates, as Spatharakis convincingly argued, the alterations were minor and confined mostly to the white streaks and slight elongation added to the beard, while the facial features of the emperor remain unaltered, see ibid. , pp. 115-116.

[14] For the coins of Leo VI, see Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. III/1-2 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), III/2, Pl XXXIV 1a, 1b2; for a recent discussion of the ivory with further bibliography, see Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), no. 138, pp. 201-202.

dynastic and/or other political concerns, where the aim is to collapse the differences between individual rulers.[15]

Yet other practices indicate that the visual identity between the individual emperor or empress and his or her image was of primary concern. This can be demonstrated perhaps most eloquently through three examples that document alterations of existing imperial images. First, the change may include the replacement of the portrait head and identifying inscription, as was the case with the so-called Monomachos Panel on the south gallery of Hagia Sophia which in its current state represents Christ flanked by Zoe and her third husband and fourth male imperial colleague, Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-55). Here, instead of replacing the image altogether, the alterations were confined to the faces of the three figures and the inscriptions giving the name of the emperor. Although scholars still debate why it was necessary to change all three heads when only the identity of the emperor was altered, it is clear that simply replacing the name of the emperor was not deemed a sufficient change that would faithfully reflect the identity of the new emperor, thus both his name and effigy needed replacement. This is all the more noteworthy when one compares the numismatic representations of Constantine Monomachos, and Zoe's earlier husbands, Romanos III and Michael IV (Figs. 8-10), since their coin effigies are very similar to one another if not virtually indistinguishable using a supra-individual portrait type in a similar manner Leo VI, Constantine VII, and Romanos I did earlier; clearly different expectations and visual standards were at play in monumental imagery closely linked with the imperial court and numismatic likenesses. The second example shows a more limited alteration process in which, according to the persuasive analysis of Spatharakis, the imperial portrait depicting Michael VII and Maria blessed by Christ in a richly illustrated late eleventh century copy of the *Homilies of John Chrysostom* (Coislin 79) was changed into an image of the succeeding emperor, Nikephoros Botaniates and the widowed Maria, whom he married

[15] It is such factors that prevent modern scholars from identifying with certainty the crouching emperor shown below the feet of Christ on the mosaic panel above the royal doors of Hagia Sophia as Basil I, Leo VI or Constantine VII.

(Fig. 163).[16] Changes were only made to the image of the emperor and only to a limited extent; his facial features were left mostly intact save for the addition of white strokes to his hair and beard to indicate a more advanced age and the elongation of Michael's short beard to a longer one, while the name of Nikephoros was added to identify the image.[17] The representation also received a new inscription on a separate sheet of parchment, which was affixed around the original page presumably to replace any text that originally referenced Michael VII. In this case, the primary signifiers of identity were age, reflected by the change of hair color and beard style, and name. The third example is known from textual sources only and attests to a different type of modification of an imperial image, not of identity but of appearance. The twelfth century historian Niketas Choniates reported an anecdote about the measures the emperor Andronikos took to disfigure the effigies of the empress Maria of Antioch (Xene): "... he altered the images of the Empress Xene (the mother of the Emperor Alexios) whom he killed by suffocation, and had her face repainted to look old and shriveled because he suspected the pity felt by spectators upon seeing her most beautiful appearance that was truly worthy of admiration."[18] The passage implies that the likeness of the empress was indeed recognized and incontestably identified with the recently deceased Maria/Xene and that her images were considered to possess sufficient intensity and force to elicit compassion from passersby and thus shed unfavorable light on the deeds of Andronikos. Therefore, the emperor undertook a project of repainting her portraits in order to alter their effect, to empty them of their favorable content, and to weaken the connections

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[16] See Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 107-118, especially pp. 114-6, and Laura Dumitrescu, "Remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques et le probleme du donateur," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): pp. 32-45.

[17] However, Spatharakis observed: "It is not clear whether the inscription on the gold background of the miniatures giving the names of those portrayed are all by the same hand which wrote the verses on the margins or that the hand responsible for the uncials in the text." See Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 113.

[18] Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 235. Also see, Harry J. Magoulias, *O city of Byzantium : Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit: 1984), Book II, 332-3, p. 183. This story comes after the story of describing Andronikos's (1183-85) representation on the outside of the church of the Forty Saints in the guise of a laborer. Maria of Antioch married Manuel on Christmas day 1161 and was killed in 1182. Garland speculates that she must have been born in the 1140s, so she must have been in her thirties, possibly close to forty when she died, see Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 201.

between the actual historical personage and her representations and thus destroy the link to collective memory by using a style and physiognomy utterly foreign within the iconography of imperial representations.

The above three examples reflect concerns with visual representation and personal identity at the imperial level – they exemplify either imperial commission or commission from a circle directly tied with the court. Clearly at this level, an intimate connection between image and imperial identity was desired, and the limited degree of pictorial likeness between image and "sitter" was strengthened and fully established by the control exercised over the altered image. A further text, however, suggests a different perception of imperial recognizability and identity at the level of the populace, however, not involving images but the actual person of the emperor and his ceremonial appearance. An anecdote from the pen of the western ambassador Liutprand visiting the court of Constantine VII in the tenth century suggests a disjunction between the actual physical appearance of the emperor and his perception by the lower echelons of society. According to the story, Leo VI (by then deceased father of Constantine VII) had taken upon him to sneak out of the Great Palace unaccompanied and in disguise to check the vigilance of the night guards protecting his capital. After bribing his way through two checkpoints he was finally arrested and imprisoned by the third guard. In vain Leo attempted to convince the guard throughout the night that he indeed was the emperor as the guard explained that he had only seen the emperor a few times, and even then at a distance:

> Certainly I have gazed at a distance once or twice, when he has appeared in public, but I could not get close, and it seemed to me then that I was looking at a wonder of nature rather than at a human being. . . . Fortune is not as kind to you as it is to him: you lie in prison, he sits upon his golden throne. . . . Do you expect me to believe that you are the emperor, a dirty rogue like you who squanders his substance with loose women.[19]

The jailer's perception of the emperor was born out of distance, an essential constituent of Byzantine imperial ceremonials; in his view the emperor could only be defined as an

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[19] Liudprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. F. A. Wright (London: 1993), ch. 11, p. 13.

inaccessible, splendid figure swathed in gold, who lacked actual human characteristics. Nevertheless, through his eloquent argument the emperor finally was able to convince the guard to at least take him to the palace the following morning where he would prove to him that he was the emperor. And indeed he did so. "The high court dignitaries ran up before his [the jailer's] eyes, showered compliments upon the emperor, took off his shoes for him, and bustled about doing various acts of service, while the poor man thought that he had better die at once."[20] Liutprand's anecdote suggests that the Byzantine emperor was not a person recognizable to the people at large based on his facial features and physiognomy and that except for the members of his court he was a distant symbolic presence whose idiosyncratic features were lost in his public image.

Imperial Images Experienced as Lifelike

The lifelike quality of representations of saints emphasized by Maguire, finds its parallel in a textual tradition that indicates that imperial images were also perceived as lifelike in Byzantium. The eighth century anonymous author of the *Parastaseis* describes a portrait of the emperor Philippikos Bardanes (711-713) with the following comment: "... it is reported that it is exactly like its model. Indeed its painter was greatly praised by other painters because the emperor's likeness did not depart from its archetype."[21] The poet Christophoros Mitylenaios of the first half of the eleventh century gave the following advice to the painter Myron: "If you are painting only Michael's appearance, then mix your ochre and grind the other colors, but if, together with his appearance [you include] all his virtues, set him up alive, if you can do so."[22] This passage too

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[20] Ibid. , ch. 11, p. 14.

[21] Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 133. For a different translation and commentary on the problems of the passage, see Cameron and Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* , pp. 272-3. Similar statement is made for example in the mid-ninth century text describing the funerary images set up at the tomb of the saints Theodore of Stoudios and his brother Joseph: "... when we gaze at their sacred images which are depicted at the tomb, it is as if we were seeing the holy Fathers themselves." Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 184. See also the description of the making of the image of St. Theodora, which is also described as lifelike even though the painter has never met the saint in person except in a series of dreams, see ibid, p. 210-211.

[22] Ibid, p. 220, who suggested that the passage refers to Michael IV (1034-41), one of the husbands of the purple-born Zoe.

underscores the perception of imperial images as lifelike representations, yet also indicates that not the exact replication of appearance but rather the rendering of all virtues of a person was required from a portrait. It was the visual manifestation of virtues rather than a high degree of verisimilitude that made an image lifelike, and worth-wile to make. The frequent statement of Byzantine authors about images of emperors or saints as lifelike and faithful renderings of nature has been dismissed as a literary topos that mindlessly repeats ancient Greek texts that articulate responses to images rooted in the illusionistic tradition of ancient Greek art.[23] Yet a less skeptical view of such Byzantine assertions has also been advanced suggesting that these descriptions might spring from the actual experiences of Byzantine beholders who indeed perceived these images as true to nature.[24] It has also been suggested that the life-like quality of images mentioned in Byzantine texts does not describe their optical or aesthetic appearance but rather the way they were experienced and viewed – as immediate, vivid pictures that provoke direct, authentic emotional responses from the viewers.[25]

In fact, it was the imperial image during the Trinitarian Controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries that furnished a compelling simile to flesh out the relationship between "image" and "prototype" in the theological argument asserting the true divinity of Christ by drawing an analogy between the relationship of Christ to God the Father and the imperial image to the living emperor.[26] These texts imply that the manner in which an imperial image functioned (i.e. created meaning) was considered to be a given, understood by society at large; according to this view an unmistakable correspondence existed between the living emperor and his effigy based on recognizability and a shared

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[23] See Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): pp. 55-75, and Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. xiv.

[24] See Henry Maguire, "Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974): pp. 111-40, especially p. 130.

[25] Liz James and Ruth Webb, "'To understand ultimate things and enter secret places': Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium," *Art History* 14, no. 1 (1991): pp. 1-17.

[26] For a discussion of the concept of the image in patristic and Byzantine writings, see Gerhart B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953): pp. 1-34; also see Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm.* (Princeton , Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 35, 74-82.

quality of some kind, which created an inalienable spiritual connection between emperor and effigy.[27] Thus St. Basil argued in the 5th century:

> For the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son inasmuch as the former is like the latter, and the latter is like the former, and in this lies their unity. So that by the peculiarity of their persons they are one and one, but in the community of their nature both are one. How then, if they are one and one, are there not two Gods? Because the imperial image, too, is called the emperor, and yet there are not two emperors: neither is the power cut asunder nor is the glory divided. And as the authority that holds sway over us is one, so the glorification that we address to it is one and not many, since the honor shown to the image is transmitted to its model. And what the image is down here by virtue of imitation (mimesis), so the Son is over there by His nature. For just as in hand-made objects the likeness is by virtue of form (kata ten morphen), so in the case of the divine nature that is uncompounded the unity is in the communion of the Godhead.[28]

The passage attests that the imperial image was considered more than just an effigy of the emperor; it was in fact perceived to be the presence of the emperor exercising identical authority and demanding the same respect as the actual person of the ruler. It is significant to note, that by the time this argument was put forth, imperial images had lost the realistic rendering of idiosyncratic facial features typical of portraits of the first through third centuries, yet the identification between the emperor and his image remained to be perceived as a matter of course. Basil's arguments drew on the oration of Athansios against the Arians dating c. 350, also attempting to explain the relationship of Christ to God the Father:

> For he who in this sense understands that the Son and the Father are one, knows that He is in the Father and the Father in the Son; for the Godhead of the Son is the Father's, and it is in the Son; and whoso enters into this is convinced that 'He that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father'; for in the Son is contemplated the Father's Godhead. And we may perceive this at once from the illustration of the Emperor's image. For in the image is the shape and form of the Emperor, and in the Emperor is

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[27] I used the term "quality" rather than "essence" advisedly in referring to the common element that is shared between image and prototype, for during the theological debates that developed and refined the theory and use of images in Byzantium, it was crucial to maintain that a physical representation (painted or carved image) did not share the essence of its prototype. See for instance the comments of Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," , pp. 13, 16.

[28] St. Basil, *De Spritu Sancto*, XVII, 44f, PG 32, p. 149. Translated in Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 47; for a different English translation and comments, see Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm.* , p. 74.

> that shape which is in the image. For the likeness of the Emperor in the image is exact; so that a person who looks at the image, sees in it the Emperor; and he again who sees the Emperor, recognizes that it is he who is in the image. And from the likeness not differing, to one who after the image wished to view the Emperor, the image might say, 'I and the Emperor are one; for I am in him, and he in me; and what thou seest in me, that thou beholdest in him, and what thou hast seen in him, that thou holdest in me.' Accordingly he who worships the image in it worships the Emperor also; for the image is his forth and appearance. Since then the Son too is the Father's Image, it must necessarily be understood that the Godhead and propriety of the Father is the Being of the Son.[29]

This passage elaborates on the idea of the identification of the emperor and his image anchored in a recognizable likeness between the two, a likeness that according to Athansios is an exact replication of form between the ruler and his image. The form provides a visual association and identification between the two since the form is inalienable from a kind of quality that is present both in the emperor and his image. The articulation of the relationship between the emperor and his image had become a rhetorical topos of orthodox theology, for it was employed not only during the Trinitarian controversies, but also for the justification of the validity of making and venerating images in the early Byzantine period and later during the Iconoclastic Controversy.[30] Thus a Coptic homily of uncertain date argued for the acceptable and desirable veneration of icons of the Virgin as follows:

> If the image of the emperor of this world when painted is set up in the midst of the market-place, becoming a protection to the whole city, and if violence is committed against anyone, and he goes and takes hold of the image of the emperor, then no man

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[29] Athanasios, Third Oration Against the Arians 5, PG 26, col. 329C-332B, for English translation see http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2816.htm; for a different English translation, see Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm.* , p. 75. This oration was recently attributed to Apollinaris, a contemporary and friend, of Athanasios, bishop of Alexandria (295-373); see ODB I, p. 218. Ladner suggested that this passage may be the first text that uses the metaphor of the imperial image, Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," , p. 8.

[30] Barber mentions that Basil's passage is cited by the florilegia of John of Damascus, see Bonifaz Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos* (Berlin, New York: 1969-), 3:147 I.35, II.31, III.48, and in the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea, G. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, Leipzig: 1901-1927), XIII, p. 69DE, see Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm.* , p. 74. Ladner also pointed out that Athanasius' passage was used with minor modifications by John of Damascus, De imaginibus, oratio III, PG XCIV, 1405A, and in the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea, Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* , XIII, p. 69 BC.

> will be able to oppose him, even though the emperor is naught but a mortal man; and he is taken to a court of law. Let us, therefore, my beloved, honor the *eikon* of Our Lady, the veritable queen.[31]

This passage attests that the public image of the emperor in a city served both as a guardian of the whole community and as an authority to provide asylum.[32] While it is not stated in the text, these powers are bestowed on the imperial image because the effigy is understood to partake in the same authority as the ruler himself. Similar logic underlies the statement of Theodosios of Amorion in the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea from 787: "When people hurry up to the wreathed images and icons of the emperor, which are sent to the cities and lands, with candles and incense they do this not to give devotion to the tablets covered with colored wax but to give devotion to the emperor."[33] This text describes the *adventus* of the imperial image to a city, a ceremonial formalized during the Tetrarchy, yet not attested after the 8th century; the silence of the sources may indicate that the practice gradually disappeared.[34]

The firm perception of Byzantine viewers about the life-like appearance of portraits of saints and emperors in fact was in part rooted in the understanding that images of the emperor and holy persons were not arbitrary and fanciful creations of artists, but authentic historical documents that shared a quality with their prototype ("the

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[31] William H. Worrell, *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection* (New York: 1923), p. 375; Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 67-68. The homily is attributed in the manuscript to Theophilus of Alexandria of the forth-fifth centuries, however, the publisher of the manuscript acknowledges the uncertainty of this attribution, and states that the date of the homily cannot be established with certainty beyond a terminus *ante quem* furnished by the 975 date of the manuscript, see Worrell, *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection* , p. 125. Kitzinger suggested a possible date for the text during the iconoclastic period, see Ernst Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age Before Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954): pp. 85-150, no. 59.

[32] According to the law code of Theodosius, imperial images had the authority to provide 10 days of asylum, see T. Mommsen, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis* (Berlin: 1905; reprint, Dublin - Zurich 1970-1971), VIIII, 44, 1, p. 518 and Kenneth M. Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), p. 201.

[33] K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), Kaiserbild, p. 743; Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* , XII, p. 1013/14D.

[34] For a discussion of the *adventus* of imperial images in the late antique period, see MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* , pp. 67-73. The tenth century *Book of Ceremonies* describes an *adventus* of the image of Anthemius, emperor in the West in the mid-fifth century to Constantinople, see Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829), I, ch. 87, pp. 393-396, thus at least information about the practice survived into the middle Byzantine period, even if the practice itself may not have continued.

sitter"), which rendered them active, living presences in the Byzantine mind.[35] The ninth century iconophile theologian, Theodore of Stoudios put it this way in an epistle addressing the emperors Michael II and Theophilos in 826 when he quoted the words of the neo-platonic philosopher, Dionysos the Areopagite: "... in sensible images, if the painter looks without interruption at the archetypal form, neither distracted by any other visible thing nor splitting his attention toward anything else, then he will, so to speak, duplicate the person painted and will show the true in the similitude, the archetype in the image, the one in the other except for their different essences [or natures]."[36] Therefore, the job of the artist is to select from all that is in front of his eye only what is elemental, what is the 'archetypal form' of the person to be depicted, this being his or her true quality, and represent this in the image thereby creating an unbreakable correlation between image and prototype through the rendering of what is perceived to be true qualities. This truthfulness to the 'archetypal form' makes Byzantine portraits of emperors to be seen as life-like by their contemporary viewers.

The Style of Byzantine Imperial Portraits

Although early Byzantine[37] imperial portraits continue the tradition of Roman imperial portraiture, yet a significant redefinition took place in what came to constitute an imperial image. Roman imperial images up to the end of the third century were defined by the recognizable likeness of the individual emperor rather than imperial insignia; the sovereign's features were manipulated to reveal virtues and character traits desirable for the imperial persona and ideology. Starting in the early forth century, the notion of

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[35] The notion of images as historical documents of sacred events was developed in detail by iconophile theologians during the iconoclastic controversy. The patriarch Photios expressed this view, for instance, in his 17th homily on the inauguration of the mosaic of the Virgin in Hagia Sophia in 867; for the English translation of the homily see Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 285-296, especially 293-294. Cormack commented on this text that Photios "develops a theory that a picture is an actual record of a Christian event and is more lifelike than a written account. Photios therefore has a theory of the didactic value of art in which icons are eye-witness reports of Christian history, and in this sense true to life." See Robin Cormack, "Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul," *Art History* 4 (1981): pp. 131-49, p. 137.

[36] Translated in Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," , p. 13, from *Epistula II*, 199, PG XCIX, 1604D.

[37] I use the term early Byzantine to refer to imperial portraits from the time of Constantine the Great to the seventh century.

recognizable likeness gradually gave way to schematic, formulaic renderings devoid of idiosyncratic features in the representations of emperors, while at the same time images began to represent the emperor donning various pieces of insignia,[38] thereby marking him out not as the first among equals — a pretension many Roman emperors kept up in their public images — but as the supreme leader of the earthly universe highly elevated above his subjects.[39] Images of empresses also began to include insignia, and beginning with the Theodosian dynasty they received the same insignia as emperors.[40] Early Byzantine imperial portraits effectively communicated the notion of dynastic unity through the visual assimilation of individual emperors — members of the Constantinian and Theodosian families are difficult to distinguish from one another — while also articulated a supra-dynastic message, for all of these rulers appeared as followers of Constantine the Great, as pointed out by Smith.[41] There is, however, a notable break between early and middle Byzantine imperial imagery both in medium, imperial physiognomy, attire, and

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[38] The diadem was introduced by Constantine the Great in 324/5. On the diadem, see Richard Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1933), pp. 56-66, Wessel and Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* , III, Insignien, p. 370-382, Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* , p. 17, Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," , pp. 177-178.

[39] For a discussion of early Byzantine imperial portraiture, see Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* ; Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* ; Smith, "Roman Portraits: Honours, Empresses, and Late Emperors," ; Julie Harboe, "The Real Image: The Imperial Portrait and the Icon in Early Byzantium," *Acta Hyperborea. Danish Studies in Classical Archaeology* 4 (1992): pp. 249-70; Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," ; Diliana Nikolova Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" (Masters thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1998); Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press: 2001); Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* (New York: 2002).

[40] For a discussion of the insignia of the early Byzantine empress, see Kent Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982); Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" .

[41] Smith, "Roman Portraits: Honours, Empresses, and Late Emperors," pp. 220-221. For an analysis of Constantinian portraiture, see Breckenridge, *Likeness. A Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* , pp. 244-252; Hans Peter L'Orange, Reingart Unger, and Max Wenger, *Das spätantike Herrscherbild von Diokletian bis zu den Konstantin-Söhnen, 284-361 n. Chr., Das Römische Herrscherbild III/4* (Berlin: 1984); D. H. Wright, "The True Face of Constantine the Great," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 493-507; Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," , pp. 185-187, 200-201. For a discussion of the portraiture of the Theodosian house, see Bente Kiilerich, "'Individualized Types' and 'Typified Individuals' in Theodosian Portraiture," in *Ancient Portraitre: Image and Message*, ed. T. Fischer-Hansen, et al., *Acta Hyperborea 4* (Copenhagen: 1992), pp. 237-48; Bente Kiilerich, *Late Fourth Century Classicism in the Plastic Arts: Studies in the So-called Theodosian Renaissance* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1993), with further bibliography.

insignia. As mentioned above, no imperial images survive in the round after the first decade of the seventh century; thus extant imperial portraits of the middle Byzantine period come down to us in two-dimensional media. Although a short, military beard appeared on some imperial portraits of the fifth and sixth centuries, beards did not become consistent attributes of senior emperors until the seventh century.[42] The physiognomy of empresses remained largely unchanged in the early and middle Byzantine periods: they continued to be shown with youthful, idealized features, yet the headdress changed between the sixth and eights centuries allowing the empress's hair to be shown under her crown.[43] The most frequently depicted imperial costume both for emperors and empresses in the middle Byzantine period became the *loros*, a burdensome attire worn only on rare occasions during imperial ceremonials, yet represented the most often in imagery.[44] The *loros* and its predecessor, the triumphal *trabea,* appeared on early Byzantine imperial representations on occasion, but it became the imperial attire par excellence only in the ninth century.[45] Despite such changes in the appearance of imperial effigies from the early to the middle Byzantine periods, their modus operandi and overall style continued: imperial portraits were ever more abstract, formulaic renderings of individuals dressed in full regalia emphasizing the consistency of the imperial image rather than the uniqueness of particular rulers.

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[42] Short military stubble appears on the Barletta Colossus (see Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* , pl. 116-120), the marble heads in the Louvre identified as Valentinian III (ibid, pl. 112) and Theodosius II (ibid, pl. 114); yet portraits of Justinian are devoid of beards, as exemplified by his mosaic portrait in San Vitale, or on the Barberini Diptych, or on the porphyry head in Venice; the identification of the last two as Justinian is conjectural, yet their imperial subject and date in the early sixth century is uncontested. For a discussion and illustrations of the porphyry head, see Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* , pp. 64-65, pls. XXXV-XXXVI.

[43] In the forth-fifth centuries empresses were shown with their hair exposed, however, from the sixth century their hair was covered completely by a veil and a bonnet, as shown by the image of Theodora and her ladies in waiting in San Vitale, or on the so-called Ariadne ivories in Milan and Vienna, as well as on representations of empresses on sixth century consular diptychs. For a discussion of the hairstyle of empresses, see Melita Emmanuel, "Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses, and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* 4/17 (1993-94): pp. 113-28, especially p. 114.

[44] Jennifer L. Ball, "The Loros in Image and Text" (Abstracts of Papers, Byzantine Studies Conference, Harvard University, October 26-29, 2000), pp. 122-23; Jennifer L. Ball, "Byzantine Dress" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 2001), pp. 23-28; Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 23-24.

[45] The shapes of imperial crowns also changed from the early to the middle Byzantine period.

The dramatic shift from Roman to Byzantine portraiture has been interpreted in various ways. L'Orange, employing the notion of *Zeitgeist,* argued that the increasingly abstract style of fourth through sixth century portraits was the result of an overwhelming spirituality of the age articulated through the schematization of physiognomy in what he called "pneumatic" or "soul portraits." Thus the newly emerging pictorial style was a direct outcome of the wish to express the spirituality of the soul through the harmonious, orderly beauty of the body, a view articulated frequently by late antique philosophers, such as Plotinos.[46] Beyond the abstraction of features L'Orange identified the enlargement of the eyes as a chief visual device conveying spirituality.[47] The enlargement and emphasis on the eyes of late antique portraits were viewed by L'Orange as expressions of spirituality, yet Smith offered a more convincing reading of this increasingly popular pictorial device.[48] Smith pointed out that imperial panegyrics of the late antique period emphasize the vigilant, all seeing, watchful eyes of the emperor, which on occasion also received epiphanies. The emphasis on eyes and vision both in visual and verbal form articulates

> a claim to see more than others. They were a claim to superior powers and soon came to be made on behalf of most figures of authority of whatever kind – political, military, intellectual, or religious – from emperors to generals, governors, philosophers, saints, and the late Roman notables more generally. The portrait images of such men express this claim to extra power in a general way, while texts can specify for us in which sphere it was exercised.[49]

He further argued that the abstract style and emphatic frontality of late antique images of provincial aristocrats reflect a 'new reality' radiating from the imperial court that is

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[46] Hans Peter L'Orange, "The Antique Origin of Medieval Portraiture," in *Likeness and Icon. Selected Studies in Classical and Early Mediaeval Art* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1973), pp. 91-102, especially pp. 91-92, 96-98.

[47] For a similar interpretation of late antique portraiture as spiritual portraits, see Breckenridge, *Likeness. A Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* , for the importance of Plotinos' and Proclus' theories for the interpretation of late antique portraiture, see especially ibid pp. 208-211, 255-256; for the interpretation of the emphatic eyes, see p. 257-261.

[48] Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," , pp. 198-200, and R. R. R. Smith, "Late Antique Portraits in a Public Context: Honorific Statuary at Aphrodisias in Caria, A.D. 300-600," *Journal of Roman Studies* LXXXIX (1999): pp. 155-89, especially pp. 185-188.

[49] Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," , p. 199.

characterized by the more formal and stately rituals.[50] Grabar also connected the growing rigidity and solemnity of imperial ceremonials with the new abstract, 'mask-like' style of imperial portraits of the early Byzantine era.[51]

Scholars have also noted significant stylistic plurality in secular and holy portraits of the early Byzantine period. Commenting on the differences in the representations of mortals and saints, especially when they appear together within the same pictorial plane, L'Orange suggested that the portraits of mortals were distinguished from representations of saints by their lack of angelic or god-like beauty and idealization.[52] The employment of divergent portrait styles within single representations from c. 550 to 700 was analyzed by Kitzinger in more depth, who observed that the abstract style of the living (or recently deceased) figures is employed as the pictorial idiom of realistic portraits in juxtaposition with the more illusionistic, three dimensional style of the effigies of saints or Christ. In his view the abstract mode expressed the authenticity of the portraits of actual, living persons, and emphasized their quality as true to life.[53] Smith, on the other hand, noted stylistic differentiations between the representations of emperors and of leading citizens in the late antique period; while office holders were typically represented as mature men with beards and with faces lined by experience and emotions, imperial effigies were shown as youthful, idealized faces reflecting calmness and emotional detachment.[54]

Byzantine imperial portraits are part of the larger context of Byzantine visual culture, and need to be seen in connection with other categories of images. Images in Constantinople in the early Byzantine period not only included images of emperors in the round, in painting, on coins, seals, the tablia of imperial officials, and on secular mosaics in the palace, as well as images of saints on garments, on liturgical implements and in the churches, but also statues of ancient gods, mythological figures, Greek and Roman

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[50] Smith, "Late Antique Portraits in a Public Context: Honorific Statuary at Aphrodisias in Caria, A.D. 300-600," , p. 189.

[51] André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936), pp. 9-10. Spatharakis suggested that the flat, abstract style of imperial portraits confer the meaning of "dignity and severity" onto the represented figure, Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 255.

[52] L'Orange, "The Antique Origin of Medieval Portraiture," , p. 102.

[53] Ernst Kitzinger, "Some Reflections on Portraiture in Byzantine Art," in *The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West, Selected Studies* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 256-69, with references to earlier literature on stylistic modes in Byzantine and early medieval art.

[54] Smith, "The Public Image of Licinius I: Portrait Sculpture and Imperial Ideology in the Early Fourth Century," , p. 183.

philosophers and statesmen.[55] The city turned into a museum of ancient masterpieces. St. Jerome's disdainful words reveal the extent to which Constantinople became the new home of many artworks from all over the empire by the end of the fourth century: "Constantinople was dedicated by denuding almost all other cities."[56] Clearly, a wide array of subject matters and styles could be encountered in early Byzantine Constantinople. The choice of style for the imperial image is consciously related to the visual environment – meaning is created by the communication articulated through visual plurality of subject matter and style.[57] Byzantine artists cast away the uniquely Roman tradition of idiosyncratic portraiture and instead tapped into the style of Greek representations from the classical past, such as gods and heroes, that were rendered with generic but idealized features. This visual vocabulary of abstraction and idealization derived from a long standing tradition, and by the virtue of its honorable history and context it endowed Byzantine imperial portraits with a specific stylistic quality that translated into an important claim: the message of the continuation of a sophisticated culture and firmly established tradition. As it was no longer possible to assume the attributes of specific divinities, as was frequently done by Roman emperors, early Byzantine emperors assumed styles that were associated with ancient divinities and figures of authority for the representation of their faces, while for the image as a whole they continued the iconographic types devised for Roman emperors.

The calcification of the imperial image into an idealized mask in the late antique period also paralleled changes in court ceremonial, as the emperor appeared more and more frequently to his subjects as a remote, untouchable figure devoid of the fallacies of

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[55] For information about ancient and early Byzantine statuary on public display in Constantinople, see Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): pp. 55-75; Cameron and Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* , pp. 48-51.

[56] Quoted in Joseph Alchermes, "Constantinople and the Empire of New Rome," in *Heaven on Earth. Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. Linda Safran (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 20.

[57] I owe a great debt to Christopher Hallett, whose talks on art and visual culture in the Roman world delivered at the University of Washington in February 2001 inspired my thinking along these lines. The talks were entitled: *Art and the Visual Culture of the Roman World*, and *Maestas, humanitas, otium cum dignitate – Function of Replication in the Roman World.* Hallett's talks were also delivered at the University of California at Berkeley in February 2001. For the meaning of stylistic plurality in Roman art, also see Tonio Hölscher, *Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System: vorgetragen am 16. Juni 1984* (Heidelberg: 1987).

human nature, and was even compared to a statue, as during the triumphal entry of Constantius II to Rome in 357. The contemporary historian Ammianus Marcellinus reports:

> The emperor was greeted with welcoming cheers, which were echoed form the hills and river-banks, but in spite of the din he exhibited no emotion, but kept the same impassive air as he commonly wore before his subjects in the provinces. Though he was very short he stooped when he passed under a high gate; otherwise he was like a dummy, gazing straight before him as if his head were a vice and turning neither to right nor left. When a wheel jolted he did not nod, and at no point was he seen to spit or wipe or rub his face or nose or to move his hand. ... As soon as he entered Rome, the home of empire and of all perfection, he went to the Rostra and looked with amazement at the Forum, that sublime monument of pristine power; wherever he turned he was dazzled by the concentration of wonderful sights.[58]

Ammianus presents the emperor through two different and contrasting modes of behavior: as the remote, frozen statue of the solemn ceremonial entry, and as the curious and impressionable visitor of the eternal city; Sabine MacCormack has pointed out that the emperor's "change of conduct" during his arrival and his actual presence in the city — a characteristic feature of the late Roman *adventus* — seeks to present the ruler both as an exulted, god-like protector of the city and a leading citizen approachable by his subjects.[59] The importance of the emperor's immobility and calmness is also praised in the 6th century panegyric of Corippus composed for the accession of Justin II in 565.[60] Here, however, the immobility and calmness are not specifically associated with ceremonial behavior but are presented as character traits or virtues of the emperor permeating his personality and behavior. His eyes, brows, face, speech, voice, mind, demeanor, actions, judgment are all characterized as calm, serene, tranquil.[61] Paul Silentiarios, rather then attributing calmness to the emperor himself praises Justinian for

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[58] Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354-378)*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: 1986), Book 16/10, pp. 100-101.

[59] MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* , p. 42. There is a further juxtaposition set up between the emperor's behavior in relation to his subjects in the province and in the city of Rome.

[60] Averil Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies," in *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 106-36, especially pp. 107-108, 119, 192; Cameron provides further examples that emphasize the emperor's physical immobility as an expression of virtue.

[61] See Averil Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: 1976), Praef. 21, I/66, II/191, II/275, II/299, II/339, II/266, II/269, III/309, IV/372, IV/377.

establishing calm and tranquility in the world in his panegyric on the restoration of Hagia Sophia delivered in 563 – clearly here the emphasis is on the emperor's role as the bringer and protector of peace.[62] On occasion even empresses are described as sources of tranquility, as for instance Ariadne receives the title *galenotatos* in the *Book of Ceremonies*.[63] In Byzantine thought the lack of motion was perceived as the expression of good behavior and a visual manifestation of moral excellence,[64] and similarly to the late antique period, immobility remained the ideal standard of public imperial behavior.[65] A panegyric praising the eleventh century emperor, Isaac Komnenos from the pen of Psellos also stresses the connection between immobility and the moral ideal: "You are an image of the signs of God. You are straight, true, stiff, exact, sweet, gentle, steadfast, firmly fixed, lofty, ... a lantern of purity, a light-bringer of piety, an impartial judge, unwavering in judgment, ... a secure counselor, noble, unshaken in (stormy) waves."[66] Psellos continues fleshing out his ideal by describing the lack of any kind of emotional or physical excess in the behavior of Isaac underscoring emphatically that moderation is one of the most highly prized imperial virtues; the lack of motion and emotion of the dignified emperor embodies the ideal of moderation.[67] As a counter example one may recall Psellos' characterization of the empress Zoe in the *Chronography* whom he did not believe to be fit to rule the empire: "Zoe was a woman of passionate interests, prepared with equal enthusiasm for both alternatives – death or life, I mean. In that she reminded me of sea-waves, now lifting a ship on high and then again plunging it down to the

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[62] See Averil Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: 1976), p. 192; and P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius* (Leipzig, Berlin: 1912), ch. 245, 944, 951.

[63] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 92, p. 424.

[64] See ODB II, p. 1419

[65] For a juxtaposition of the just emperor's lack of movement with the constant movement of barbarians and pretenders in speeches of John Mauropus (1000-1075/80), see Jacques Lefort, "Rhétorique et politique: trois discours de Jean Mauropous en 1047," *Travaux et mémoires* 6 (1976): pp. 265-303, especially p. 287.

[66] Translated by Henry Maguire, "Style and Ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art," *Gesta* 28, no. 2 (1990): pp. 217-31, p. 224.

[67] See Ibid., p. 224. For a similar emphasis on moderation as a cardinal virtue of a ruler, see Photios' advice to Boris of Bulgaria in the ninth century: "Do not neglect, as if they were of no account, the things that pertain to the body and its attitudes and movements; for the best sort of order and system in these things has proved itself in experience to be not the least part of wisdom. . . . Wherefore a prince ought to appear orderly and stately in the look of his face, the care of his hair, and the wearing of his clothes (being neither foppish nor slovenly). . . . An orderly gait becomes the prince: (he must neither mince like a woman nor lurch along in disorderly and irregular fashion)." See *Letter of Photios to Boris I*, PG CII, col. 627-96; passage translated in Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 113.

depths."[68] Anna Komnene described the immovability of her father at an overnight audience in his private quarters following an exhausting all-day reception of the Celtic embassy:

> Like a statue wrought by the hammer, made perhaps of bronze or cold-forged iron, the emperor would sit through the night ... The attendants were all worn out, but by frequently retiring had a rest and then came back again – in bad humor. Thus not one of them would stay motionless as long as he did; all in one way or another kept changing position: one would sit down, another turned his head away and rested it on something, another propped himself against a wall. Only one man, the emperor, faced this tremendous task without weakening. His endurance was truly remarkable.[69]

Clearly the emperor's unwavering stance is an expression of his physical, emotional, and mental excellence, superiority, and dignity, and this quality is a fundamental element of imperial images in Byzantium.

Later Byzantine ceremonials were characterized by the display of an immobile figure of the ruler and by an increasing distance between the populace and emperor resulting in the ever more strictly choreographed and tightly controlled ritual appearances of the emperor – the emperor no longer mingled with the populace but constantly maintained distance from the people at large.[70] By the tenth century, the remoteness and distance of the imperial presence was even emphatically dramatized during face-to-face audiences at the Magnaura Palace where the imperial throne was catapulted high above all participants creating such a remoteness between emperor and visitors that dignified interaction was only possible through intermediaries, as is reported by Liutprand about his visit to the court of Constantine VII.[71] Distance, as one of the defining characteristic of the relationship between emperor and populace is also mentioned by Liutprand in his anecdote about Leo VI discussed above, and clearly it contributes to the lack of need to

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[68] Michael Psellus, *Historia Syntomos*, ed. H.-G. Beck, A. Kambylis, and R. Keydell, trans. W. J. Aerts, vol. 30, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Berlin: Wlater de Gruyter), Book 6, ch. 5, p. 157.
[69] Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1969), ch. XIV, 4, 5-7, p. 451, also see Lynda Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," *Byzantion* LXIV (1994): pp. 19-39, 261-313, especially p. 24.
[70] For a discussion of imperial ceremonials, see Otto Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung in höfischen Zeremoniell*, 2 ed. (Darmstadt: 1956); Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies," .
[71] Liudprand, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings* , Antapodosis, Book 6, ch. 5, p. 153.

be specific about facial features and bodily proportions and demeanor in imperial portraits.

Functions and Cult of Imperial Images

Imperial images had complex functions, which can be classified into three categories: the expression of legal authority, the articulation of charismatic authority, and the manifestation of sacred — in contradistinction to holy and divine — potency. The legal authority ascribed to imperial images is demonstrated first by their function as a means of authentication and legalization of coins, seals, and weights, second by their power to vest imperial authority onto officials who carry insignia or wear badges with the imperial image on their clothing, third by the authority of the emperor's image to offer asylum. The authenticating function of the imperial image as regards its use on coins, seals, and weights continues without change until the end of the Byzantine Empire. The practice of endowing officials with badges carrying the imperial effigy on their robes is widely attested in the early and late Byzantine periods, yet, little evidence survives either in texts or images for its continuation during the middle Byzantine period (except for the objects themselves, such as crowns with imperial figures sent as diplomatic gifts, as the so-called Holy Crown of Hungary sent by the emperor Michael Doukas to the Hungarian king Géza); the authority of the imperial image to offer sanctuary is only attested in the early Byzantine period.[72]

Charismatic imperial authority is accorded the imperial effigy because it is understood as the presence of the emperor through which his power, authority, and personal care are made manifest anywhere where his image is set up, thereby creating an imperial omnipresence both within and outside the borders of the empire. The official sending of the autonomous, large scale imperial effigy (*lauraton*) to different parts of the empire and to foreign potentates is well-attested in the Early Byzantine period, however,

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[72] After the early Byzantine period, it was images of saints and Christ that offered similar protection, as for example argued by Anna Kartsonis, who has analyzed historiated phylacteries decorated with images of saints produced during the iconoclastic period and used as guarantors of protection, see Anna Kartsonis, "Protection against All Evil: Function, Use, and Operation of Byzantine Historiated Phylacteries," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994): pp. 73-102.

after the eight century no evidence survives that would suggest that such images were dispatched officially to foreign rulers or to Byzantine cities with any regularity. Yet small scale imperial images on portable objects were undoubtedly sent during the middle Byzantine period, as attested by the Holy Crown of Hungary sent to King Géza by Michael VII Doukas, and possibly the so called Crown of Monomachos thought to have been sent by Constantine IX Monomachos to Andrew I of Hungary (Fig. 127). These portable objects sought to articulate the universal authority of the emperor that reached beyond the physical borders of his empire and extended his sovereignty over kings of allied kingdoms. According to Byzantine imperial ideology, other terrestrial Christian rulers belonged to the family of kings, over which the Byzantine emperor presided as the king of kings; yet this idealized view of the earthly hierarchy hardly reflected faithfully the actual state of political alliances between Byzantium and other Christian states, and therefore are classified under the charismatic rather than the legal category.[73]

The sacred potency of the emperor was extended to his image as indicated by the cult of imperial images that continued until 425, when Theodosius's edict outlawed this practice,[74] although remnants of the cultic treatment of imperial effigies may be found later in the custom of placing the imperial image on the altar in the church attested in the early Byzantine period, and in the reception of imperial images arriving to the cities in the form of an elaborate ceremonial, and through their decoration with wreaths, and the lighting of candles in front of them. However, evidence for the cultic use of the imperial image is scarce after the early Byzantine period.[75] The early ninth century iconophile patriarch Nikephoros admonished the iconoclast emperor Constantine V because he

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[73] For a discussion of the notion of the family of kings, see for example, Franz Dölger, "Die 'Familie der Könige' im Mittelalter," in *Byzanz und die Europäische Staatenwelt* (Ettal: 1953), pp. 34-69.

[74] Mommsen, *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis* , XV, 4, 1, pp. 818-9; see Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung in höfischen Zeremoniell* , p. 206, n. 203; and Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* , p. 211, who provides a summary of the law. For an English translation of the passage, see Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmodian Constitutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 432; Pharr's translation is also quoted in Barber, *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm.* , p. 152, no. 72.

[75] See Belting's comment: "It is uncertain how far veneration of the imperial image persisted in the Middle Ages. . . ," Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 102.

forced his subjects to worship his images and compares him to Nebuchadnezzar.[76] It is however questionable that this report should be taken literally, for it is part of the larger context of the discourse of the iconoclastic controversy in which iconophile ideologues spared no charges against their iconoclast opponents.[77] Thus this text cannot serve as evidence for the continuing cult of imperial images in the eight century. The negative topos of the worship of imperial images is also used to discredit the views of a heretic in the writings of the ninth century patriarch, Photios. In the Bibliotheca he provides a synopsis of the historical work of the Arian Philostorgius (ca. 368- ca. 439);

> Photios says that his author, whom he calls an enemy of God and clearly regards as a liar, accused Christians of offering sacrifices to an image of Constantine placed upon a column of porphyry and of honoring it with lighted lamps and incense, while they offered prayers to it as to God and made supplications to it to ward off calamities.[78]

Photios's highly polemical presentation of the narrative of the cult of Constantine' image implies that such practices were not permissible in the ninth century, however, it is important to note, that what appears to be most abhorrent in the practice is that intercessory prayers offered to the imperial effigy – an honor that should be offered to images of Christ and saints only. A further reference to an imperial image in the Acts of the Eighth Ecumenical Council in 869 in the context of the persuasion of an iconoclast of his erratic ways again relies on the topos of the honor given to the imperial image by the iconoclast but denied to the images of Christ and saints.[79] A reference to the devotion accorded to an imperial image of the middle Byzantine period in the *Book of Ceremonies* mentions the commemoration of the image of Basil I in the Nea Church on the eve of the

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[76] *Antirrheticus*, I, 27, PG100, 276 and *Apologeticus pro ss. Imaginibus*, PG 100, 561, see Andre Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantine: dossier archéologique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1984), p. 201.

[77] See for instance "Das Urteil der Zeitgenossen und der Nachwelt," Ilse Rochow, *Kaiser Konstantin V (741-775), Berliner Byzantinische Studien 1* (Frankfurt: 1994), pp. 123-172, especially 131-138.

[78] Setton, *Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century* , p. 204; for Philostrogius' text, see PG 65, 479A.

[79] Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* , XVI, p. 388 C-D; see Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," , p. 32, no. 156. ". . . the *prepositus* Baanes gave him a *nomisma* that carried the image of the emperor, and said 'will you take that *nomisma*?' Theodoros said, I will truly take/accept it because one must give honor to the imperial *nomisma*. Baanes said, 'if you do not dishonor the image of the mortal emperor, why do you dishonor the *theandric* image of our Lord, and his all holy mother, and all the saints? Theodore said, when you show me a *nomisma*, I know without a doubt, that it carries the image of the emperor. But when you demand that I venerate the figure and image of Christ, I do not know, that Christ receives it . . . ."

feast of Elijah, however, the ceremonial itself consists of only the lighting of candles in front of the effigy of Basil, founder of the Nea.[80] It is noteworthy that no other reference to the display, cult, or function of imperial images is found in the *Book of Ceremonies*. Pseudo Kodinos provides a further reference to the use of the imperial image in the fourteenth century in his description of the Christmas procession in the course of which banners are carried decorated with representations of archangels, saints, and the figure of the emperor riding on horseback.[81]

The isolated incidents mentioned above do not furnish enough evidence to suggest that the cult of imperial images indeed continued as a widely practiced phenomenon into the middle Byzantine period.[82] Harboe emphasizes the differences that develop between imperial images and icons underscoring that "no supernatural power is attached to the [imperial] image."[83] That imperial images were considered to be active agents in the late antique and early Byzantine periods is well attested by textual sources. It is however not clear that this active agency of the imperial image remained unchanged in the Middle Byzantine period; rather it seems that the imperial image was transformed from an active to a less dynamic/active/potent entity, but one that still constituted the presence of the emperor since the understanding of the relationship of "image" and "prototype" informs the perception of imperial images – they still refer back to the prototype (the emperor and the imperial ideal) and therefore render the presence of the emperor available in the image.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the nature of Byzantine imperial portraiture by examining what constitutes a Byzantine imperial portrait, how it was perceived by contemporaries,

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[80] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 19, p. 118.
[81] Jean Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* (Paris: 1966), IV B48, 14-15, p. 196.
[82] While the deaths of emperors and empresses were commemorated, this constitutes part of the imperial cult, but not the cult of the imperial image. For a list of imperial burial sites, see Glanville Downey, "The Tombs of the Byzantine Emperors at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople," *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 79-81 (1959-61): pp. 27-51; Philip Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): pp. 3-63.
[83] Harboe, "The Real Image: The Imperial Portrait and the Icon in Early Byzantium," , p. 256.

and addressed questions about its style and function. Byzantine imperial portraits are formal public images typically accompanied by an inscription identifying the represented figure. Despite their generic and abstract quality they were perceived as life-like renderings by contemporary viewers and were understood to render the presence of the emperor. Byzantine imperial portraits were not characterized by a consistent, easily recognizable portrait type of the individual rulers found across media, rather in certain media, such as coins and seals, they intentionally collapsed individual differences in order to present the rulers with a supra-individual pictorial consistency that aimed to articulate the legitimacy of succession and the strength of tradition. The lack of consistent, recognizable facial features in imperial portraits reflects to a certain degree the great distance between the ruler who appears in highly choreographed ceremonials as a living image in front of his populace who rarely, if ever, are able to encounter him or her face to face to inspect his or her idiosyncratic features. Yet in certain situations the visual identity between the ruler and his/her image was of great importance, particularly in monumental images or images directly linked with the court.

Generic facial features with minimal references to individual appearance, and abstract, frontal bodies fully draped in imperial dress constitute imperial portraits. Several factors have contributed to the development of these stylistic features in Byzantine imperial portraiture. The blank, idealized facial features may have been derived from the Greco-Roman tradition of images of authority characterized by blank, idealized facial features, while the strictly frontal, emotionless appearance of faces and bodies may reflect imperial ceremonials where the emperor or empress appears as a static, distant, image-like entity, and also signal primary imperial virtues, such as immobility, calmness, moderation. The realm of the image and the realm of 'real life' permeate in imperial ceremonials, as emperors and empress in their public appearances imitate images — being like an image is the most desirable comportment for an imperial figure when appearing in public.

Imperial images of the middle Byzantine period have three, somewhat overlapping functions. They provide legal authority through authenticating the value and validity of coins, weights, and seals. Since the image of the emperor in this period is still

understood to contain his presence, imperial images are characterized by charismatic authority, and although the cult of imperial images is not attested after the early Byzantine period, imperial images still preserved a kind of sacred potency.

CHAPTER III: IMAGES OF AUTHENTICATION

> "Theodore said, when you show me a *nomisma*, I know without a doubt, that it carries the image of the emperor."[1]

In the early Byzantine Empire of the fourth and fifth centuries images of the emperor, and frequently of the empress, became pervasive emblems associated with the official exercise of imperial power, and in the absence of the emperor such images could substitute his actual presence. In this period imperial effigies were stamped on coins,[2] seals,[3] and the bottoms of silver dishes,[4] while metal or glass flat weights sometimes carried images of the emperor, and steelyard weights were fashioned into a statuette of a seated emperor or even more often into the bust of an empress;[5] imperial office holders also wore badges with representations of the emperor or the imperial couple and presided in halls decorated with imperial images, and the army went into battle under banners bearing the portrait of the emperor.[6] Thus the imperial effigy was used to guarantee the

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[1] The passage is derived from a dialogue recorded in the Acts of the Council of 869, in which an iconophile and an iconoclast debate the honor due to holy images and images of the emperor, see G. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, Leipzig: 1901-1927), XVI, p. 388 C-D; Gerhart B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953): 1-34, p. 32, no. 156.

[2] Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. II/1-2 (Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Washington D.C.: 1968); Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, vol. III/1-2 (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973).

[3] G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel: 1972); Nicolas Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986).

[4] Erica Cruikshank Dodd, *Byzantine Silver Stamps, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, no. 7* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1961).

[5] For weights, measuring, and sealing see Gary Vikan and John Nesbitt, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing, and Weighing* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbraton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1980). For steelyard weights, see the recent discussion of Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses, The New Middle Ages* (New York: 2002).

[6] For the use of the imperial image, see *Kaiserbild* in K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), III, pp. 722-854. Consular diptychs show the use of imperial images, and Eusebius describes the labarum carrying imperial images. For consular diptychs, see Richard Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte 2* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1929); for the description of the labarum by Eusebius, see Eusebius, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin*, trans. Friedhelm Winkelmann (Berlin: 1975), 1.31.

highest quality and proper weight of a product or the purity of a metal, to vouchsafe the authority of an office holder, and to rally the troops. This chapter examines the use of effigies of empresses for the purposes of authentication by analyzing representations of empresses surviving on Byzantine coins and seals of the late eight through the late eleventh century. Since both coins and seals are official objects, they propagate public imagery that was desirable to disseminate across the empire and even beyond its borders.

Coin Denominations and their Audience

Coins of the late eighth through the late eleventh century were minted in gold, silver, and copper, and the chief mint of the period operated in Constantinople. Between the end of the eighth and the end of the tenth century only one gold denomination was produced, the *solidus* or *nomisma*, and from the late tenth to the late eleventh century two gold denominations were issued, the *histamenon* (with the weight of the *solidus*) and the smaller *tetarteron*.[7] For most of the period, only one type of silver coin was minted, the *milaresion*, although from the mid-eleventh century sometimes fractional silver coins were also struck.[8] The copper coinage of the period comprised one denomination for the most part, the *follis*, but occasional *half-folles* were also issued.[9] Constantinopolitan coins of the eighth through the eleventh centuries reveal little information about their production[10] due to the significant changes that took place in mint practices during the eighth century[11] - the production of fractional gold had ceased in the middle of the eighth

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[7] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 15-16. In the western mints fractional gold coins were minted in this period, however, the weight of the coins was much smaller than those issued in the mint of Constantinople. See ibid, p. 16.

[8] Ibid. , III/1, p. 16.

[9] Ibid. , III/1, p. 16. For a relationship of the *solidus*, *milaresia*, and *folles* to one another in the late eleventh century, see ibid. p. 17.

[10] Michael F. Hendy, "On the administrative basis of the Byzantine Coinage c. 400-900 and the Reforms of Heraclius," *Historical Journal, Univeristy of Birmingham* XII, no. 2 (1970): pp. 129-54, especially p. 145. Hendy's emphasis is on the coinage of the ninth century, however, his characterization is equally valid for the period eighth through the eleventh century.

[11] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , pp. 73, 77.

century,[12] the traditional mintmark CONOB disappeared from gold coins after 742,[13] and the employment of *officina* marks and indiction signs fell into a complete disarray and eventually disuse after the reign of Leo III.[14] These changes parallel and reflect an increasingly centralized fiscal administration centered in the capital with the mint of Constantinople as the primary place of coin production.[15] With one central mint in operation less information was needed on the coins themselves.[16]

Gold coinage was a direct reflection of the needs of the state; as John Haldon put it, it was "designed primarily for the use of the state in redistributing its revenues and in collecting its income."[17] *Solidi* were used primarily to pay the military and the imperial bureaucracy, and to collect taxes. Silver coins were struck in the name of joint rulers from Leo III to Theophilos. Although they had a ceremonial character in commemorating the elevation of the junior colleague to the throne, Grierson maintains that they usually

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[12] For a discussion of the discontinuation of the minting of *semissises* and *tremissises* see Ibid. III/1 p. 15, 22, 347. Grierson emphasized that the scattering of *semissis*, *tremissis* and *nomismata* to the people of Constantinople on the occasion of the elevation of the sons of Constantine V to the rank of Caesar in 769 mentioned by Theophanes Confessor indicates that the use of *tremissis* and *semissis* have become rare, and after the mid-eighth century were only used occasionally for ceremonial purposes. See Ibid. III/1 p. 22.

[13] Ibid., p. 73.

[14] Ibid., pp. 77-81.

[15] The process of centralization began during the reign of Heraclius, as indicated by the greatly reduced numbers of regional mints after the first quarter of the seventh century — the only mints left in the eastern part of the empire were Constantinople and Alexandria, and in the western part they were Carthage, Rome, and Ravenna. After the Lombard conquest Constans II opened the mints of Syracuse and Naples. See Hendy, "On the administrative basis of the Byzantine Coinage c. 400-900 and the Reforms of Heraclius" and Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/1, p. 74. During the late eighth and ninth century (up to 878, when it was captured by the Arabs) Syracuse remained an important mint where gold and copper issues were struck, while the mint in Naples also operated occasionally issuing gold coins. The mint in Cherson operated from the reign of Michael III until 989 when it fell to the Russians and produced copper issues, most of which did not carry effigies of the emperors. After the reign of Basil II the mint of Constantinople remained the central issuing authority, with occasional coinages struck in Thessaloniki. See Ibid., pp. 77-94.

[16] For the organization of the Byzantine fiscal administration and coin production see: Hendy, "On the administrative basis of the Byzantine Coinage c. 400-900 and the Reforms of Heraclius," and Michael Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 409-424, 500-512. Also see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/1, pp. 73-77.

[17] John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 117 and John Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," in *The Long Eighth Century*, ed. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), pp. 225-64, especially p. 232. Also see: D. M. Metcalf, "How Extensive Was the Issue of Folles During the Years 775-820?," *Byzantion* 37 (1967): pp. 270-310, especially p. 275; Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450*, pp. 602ff, 662ff.

remained in production throughout the reigns.[18] The silver coinage kept its aniconic design until Alexander introduced the image of Christ into it, and from the reign of Romanos I imperial effigies were also included on silver coins.[19] Copper coins, on the other hand, exchanged hands frequently in market transactions conducted by the populace and were given as change by tax collectors to taxpayers who were required to pay their dues in gold.[20]

Bellinger argued that the visual propaganda of the empire was communicated primarily by gold coins,[21] yet recent studies have drawn attention to the role of copper coins in disseminating imperial messages in the early Byzantine period arguing that they were used more frequently and more regularly by the people at large than were gold coins.[22] There are however two factors in the period 780 to 1081 that represent significant departures in the use and circulation of *folles* from what is known about these monetary practices of the early Byzantine period: first, the apparent scarcity of *folles* in the period 650 to 820; second, the introduction of the so-called anonymous *follis* in the tenth century that no longer carry either the representation or the name of the emperor (Fig. 11).

First, scholars have noted that the available evidence suggests a significant decline in the number of copper coins found at archeological excavations for the period 650 to 820 in the provinces,[23] while the archaeological evidence for the same period

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[18] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 63.
[19] Ibid. , III/1, p. 64.
[20] Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* , p. 118 and Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," , p. 239. For the process of paying taxes in gold and receiving change in base-metal coins in the twelfth century, see Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* , pp. 286-287. Although the evidence is lacking to securely date the beginning of this practice, Hendy suggested that it may go back to the reign of Leo III or his immediate successors, ibid p. 288. Also see Haldon's and Hendy's remarks about taxation in kind, Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* , p. 119; Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," , p. 232; and Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* , p. 298-299.
[21] Alfred R. Bellinger, "The Coins and Byzantine Imperial Policy," *Speculum* 31, no. 1 (1956): 70-81, p. 71.
[22] See for instance Leslie Brubaker and Helen Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," *Gender and History* 12, no. 3 (2000): pp. 572-94, especially p. 537.
[23] See for example Speros Vryonis, "An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Gold Coins (668-741)," *Zbornik Radova* 8 (1963): pp. 291-300, especially p. 292; Metcalf, "How Extensive Was the Issue of Folles During the Years 775-820?," , pp. 305-306; Vasso Penna, *Life in Byzantine Cities of the Peloponnesos: The*

indicates a far more vigorous monetary activity in Constantinople and its vicinity.[24] Such marked difference in the available evidence led Metcalf to conclude that:

> a radical change had taken place in monetary circulation, in the interval between the two reigns [of Leo IV and Basil I]. The eighth-century *folles*, we may conjecture, were largely restricted in their circulation to the metropolitan region, while by the end of the ninth century an every-day monetary economy was spreading to the cities of the provinces.[25]

Although there is evidence for the use of gold coins in the same period,[26] this also appears to have been on a smaller scale than in the preceding and succeeding eras.[27] One needs to be cautious in interpreting this evidence. The dearth of numismatic evidence from the provinces of the empire for the period 650 to 820 may be the result of not only an actual decline of numismatic activity but also of other factors.[28] The lack of evidence

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Numismatic Evidence (8-12th Century), Mneme Martin J. Price, Vivliotheke tes Hellenikes Nomismatikes Hetaireias, no. 5 (1996), p. 268; Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," pp. 240-242.

[24] Metcalf, "How Extensive Was the Issue of Folles During the Years 775-820? " p. 304.

[25] Ibid., p. 304. Metcalf analyzed the copper coins of four reigns (Leo IV, Leo V, the anepigraphic *folles* of possibly Nikephoros I, and Michael II) in the period 775-820 based on coins found in European public and private collections, to estimate the numbers of copper coins issued by the above four emperors. He suggested that 5 to 30 million *folles* were minted for Leo IV, 2 to 13 million *folles* for Leo V, 5 to 15 million of the anepigraphic *folles* for Nikephoros, and a minimum of 2 to 10 million *folles* for Michael II. The comparison of these numbers with the estimated size of the coinage of Basil I from the second half of the ninth century (30 to 90 million *folles*) and the numbers of *folles* recorded at the Corinth excavations (286 specimens of Basil I, but only 2 of Leo IV). One fundamental problem with this evidence is that the coins do not come from archaeological contexts but from museum collection. For comments on Metcalf's methodology and conclusions see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 94-97.

[26] Vryonis found textual evidence for the late seventh through the early ninth centuries suggesting that gold coins retained a significant role in the trade of the empire beyond their use for taxation and hoarding. Although his methodology has been criticized by numismatists, his work provides valuable information about the use and importance of gold coins in the seventh through ninth centuries. See Vryonis, "An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Gold Coins (668-741)," pp. 296-300. See Hendy's skeptical comments about the usefulness of the *Farmer's Law* as evidence for monetary exchange in the seventh and eighth centuries, Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* , pp. 297-298.

[27] For the shortage of gold coins during the reign of Constantine V in the 760s, see: Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," , p. 240.

[28] See for example the comments of Penna, who drew attention to several factors that may have contributed to the decrease in coin finds in this period on the Peloponnesos in addition to the fundamental shift in urban life. She argued that a comparison of the numbers of coins found in the period 650-820 with those of the sixth and early seventh centuries result in a skewed interpretation of the evidence because the coin finds of the sixth and early seventh centuries do not reflect the normal "rhythms of coin circulation" of daily transactions as it was an epoch devastated by raids, and earthquakes. Such upheavals would have prompted the formation of hoards while at the same time contributing to the rapid loss of single coins. She argued further that the reforms of Heraclius that resulted in the closure of provincial mints also strengthened the

in certain regions may reflect the lack of systematic archaeological excavation and recording. Based on the available evidence and current scholarly consensus the following conclusions may be drawn. An analysis of the coins of empresses produced in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, namely those of Irene the Athenian, must take into account the marked difference between the circulation of coins, and *folles* in particular, between Constantinople and the provinces.[29] Thus, when analyzing the coins of Irene based on the available evidence, it appears that during her reign it was mostly the people of Constantinople and its immediate vicinity who appear to have been engaged in regular petty monetary transactions, while there appears to be little indication of coins changing hands with any frequency in the rest of the empire. Therefore, the people of Constantinople appear to have been the main consumers and audience for Irene's *folles*, while the gold coinage was intended first of all for her military and imperial office holders. Some of the gold coins, however, must have found their way to the populace even outside the capital, who then used them for their tax payments, as the 100 pounds of gold collected in customs during a fair at Ephesus in the course of the reign of Constantine VI indicates.[30] The production and use of copper coins in great numbers was reestablished by the reign of Theophilos and continued to the end of the period.

Second, a new type of *follis* was introduced by the emperor John Tzimiskes ca. 970, the so-called anonymous *follis* (Fig. 11). These coins lack the effigy and the name of the emperor and carry a representation of Christ on the obverse and typically show an inscription, on occasion accompanied by a cross, on the reverse, or the image of the

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decline in monitized market transactions. She also pointed out that due to a series of changes in society and civic life, urban centers might have shifted to new locations thus far eluding the prying eyes of modern archeologists. See Penna, *Life in Byzantine Cities of the Peloponnesos: The Numismatic Evidence (8-12th Century)* , pp. 268-270.

[29] Some historians interpreted these statistics as a decline in urban life, see for example Alexander Kazhdan, "Vizantiiskie goradova v VII-XII vekakh," *Sovjetskaja Arkheologija* 21 (1954): pp. 168-88. Others maintained that it had little effect on urban life due to the more ample evidence for the usage of gold coinage in the same period, see for example Vryonis, "An Attic Hoard of Byzantine Gold Coins (668-741)," . Still others offered a more careful interpretation of the existing evidence cautiously qualifying what they mean by urban decline, see for example, Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture* , pp. 120-121.

[30] See Haldon, "Production, Distribution and Demand in the Byzantine World," for a description of how the military and the bureaucracy exchanged the salary they received in gold coins for goods and services. For the tax levied at the fair in Ephesus, see Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford: 1997), p. 645, and no. 3; ibid Mango and Scott also intimate that the 100 lbs of gold suggests a total sum of 1000 lbs of gold revenue of the fair, a fact they find hard to accept.

Virgin. John Skylitzes, the eleventh century chronicler reported about its inauguration as follows:

> In gratitude to Christ the Savior for his victories [over the Bulgarians], starting afresh, the Emperor rebuilt the church above the vault of the Chalke, sparing nothing that might enhance its splendor and beauty. He also excused all tax-payers from the so-called *kapnikon*. He also ordered that the image of the Savior be inscribed on the gold and copper coins, something which had not happened before, and on one of the sides there was written Roman letters saying: Jesus Christus, King of kings – a practice which subsequent emperors retained.[31]

As Grierson remarked, this statement of Skylitzes is not quite accurate, for the effigy of Christ had been part of the iconography of gold coins since the mid-ninth century, however, regarding copper coins his report appears trustworthy.[32] The legend of these coins also called Christ Emmanuel, a feature not commented upon by Skylitzes. Grierson named three motifs that may have initiated the introduction of these *folles*: Tzimiskes's piety, his attempt to repent for the murder of his friend and previous emperor, Nikephoros Phokas, and "a probably conscious element of religious propaganda, since the Saracen wars of Nikephoros and John showed some aspects of a Crusade and the follis was the denomination that would circulate most widely amongst the common people in the conquered provinces."[33] It cannot be argued convincingly that Tzimiskes's repentance for Nikephoros' murder would have affected the selection of this coin type for two reasons: first, there is simply no room for such psychological motivations in official imagery associated with the emperor; second, on his coinage Tzimiskes is shown with imagery that emphatically underscores his justified, divine election to the throne, thus appears unlikely that on his copper coins he would have aimed to articulate his remorse for the murder of his predecessor. Moreover, Skylitzes's emphasis is not on the general piety of the emperor, but rather on his pious thanksgiving to Christ following his victory over the Bulgarians. It is also possible that Tzimiskes viewed bronze coinage as an

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[31] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)*, trans. John Wortley (University of Manitoba, Centre for Hellenic Civilization, 2000), John Tzimiskes, ch. 19, p.168. Grierson provides a translation from Cedrenus, which relates the same events and takes its material verbatim from Skylitzes, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, p. 634.

[32] Ibid. , III/2, p. 635.

[33] Ibid. , III/2, p. 635.

effective means of religious propaganda and thus the image of Christ and the legend "ihsus christus basileu basile" on his bronze coins served his policy of expansion and conversion. Although these coins did not depict the image of the emperor, given that the only minting authority in Byzantium belonged to the emperor, the coins reflected back to him and his policies, and emphasized the ultimate source of his power: Christ, the king of kings. Tzimiskes, a usurper gave particular attention to articulate the divine source of his power, for on his gold coins he is shown in the presence of the Virgin who crowns him and the hand of God blesses the head of the emperor, while the image of Christ appears on the other side of the coin. Anonymous *folles* were struck until the mid-eleventh century when during the reign of Constantine X both anonymous and 'signed' bronze coins were produced.

The scarcity of copper between 650 to 820 and the employment of the anonymous folles from ca. 970 to the end of the eleventh century indicates that in the period 780 to 1081 copper coinage was not employed consistently as a primary tool of visual propaganda in disseminating imperial messages to the people at large either due to the small size of copper issues in the early decades of the period or due to the lack of imperial imagery on the follis in the last century of the period.

It is worth asking how the broad availability, frequent use, and wide circulation of an object, such as a coin, affects its ability to communicate messages, and whether there is a difference in significance ascribed to images that are more difficult to come by than to those that are encountered nearly every day, or at least with frequency. If one supposes that coins communicated an important message, an assumption shared by most scholars of Byzantine culture, one also needs to think about the process of decoding or receiving this message by those to whom it was addressed. There may not necessarily be a contradiction between Bellinger's statement, that visual propaganda in Byzantium was communicated primarily by gold coins, and Brubaker's assertion that "gold coins had a more restricted audience."[34] Even if the populace used primarily copper coins for their daily transactions, it is likely that they would also encounter gold coins on a regular, but limited basis, for they were required to pay their taxes in the *nomisma*. It is possible then

[34] Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , p. 573.

to imagine, that gold coins, not often in the possession of the populace acquired a heightened importance when they did end up in the hands of the *hoi poloi*. On these occasions the coins would likely be scrutinized with attention, unlike the way a coin of base metal used frequently at the market would be looked at. However, while gold coins may have a stronger impact upon their users or viewers on those rare occasions when they are accessible, it is also important to concede that the ubiquitous nature of bronze coins does not necessarily undermine their impact, despite the fact that they are probably not looked at with as much interest and care during every transaction. The accessibility and ubiquity of bronze coins endow them with a "referential quality" – due to their wide availability it is easy to pull one out of the purse to look at. It is also possible to imagine, that when one receives a gold coin, this would activate an interest in looking anew at the old, familiar copper coins in order to compare them. This way they would acquire their significance and a message would emerge through a dialog between the images, based on the similarities and differences discernible between them. It is also likely that iconographic changes would spur renewed interest in viewing the coins more carefully, be they in copper, silver, or gold.

One also needs to consider the information available about Byzantine thinking regarding the hierarchy of materials and the hierarchy of iconography. We have information from a fourteenth century treatise about how seals made of different materials (wax, lead, silver, gold) were used to reflect the position of the addressee in the hierarchical vision of Byzantine ideology, while it is made clear in the tenth century *Book of Ceremonies*, that gold seals were also regulated in size based on the dignity of their recipients. It is, however, not clear that the different metals and denominations of the coinage were viewed in the same way. Yet, as Grierson has shown, there is a tendency to decorate the various coin denominations with imagery that fits into a hierarchical system. It appears significant that once the image of Christ was introduced into the coinage of the empire after 843 for the next 130 years it remained exclusively on gold coins – thus at the beginning only the coins made of the most precious material were deemed appropriate the carry the likeness of Christ. It is only during the reign of Tzimiskes in the tenth century that the effigy of Christ made its appearance on copper coins, on the anonymous

folles, which continued to be produced during the reigns of his followers.[35] The image of the Virgin as an independent type tended to be placed on *milaresia*, where it replaced the cross potent, or on fractional gold coins – thus usually it was not placed on the most valuable denomination.[36] There appear to be some differences in the imperial messages articulated by the various denominations of an emperor's coinage, although these variances are in emphases rather than divergent statements. Until the reign of Theophilos, gold and bronze coins shared similar imperial iconography, the difference being that bronze coins included the traditional mark of value (a large M) on them reducing the surface available for visual imagery. Silver coins remained aniconic, save the cross on steps on their reverse, until the early tenth century, and emphasized the emperor's victory won under the sign of the cross and with the help of Christ. Once religious images were reintroduced into numismatic iconography in the mid-ninth century, gold coins emphasized primarily the source of the emperor's power and his piety – and did this by using images and texts together. From this point on, silver coins also emphasized the source of imperial power and piety but also made reference to imperial victory, however, expressed these ideas primarily through their legends rather than images.[37] On the other hand, copper coins at least until the introduction of the anonymous *folles* in the 970s primarily articulated the emperor's exercise of power in their imagery, for they placed great emphasis on the insignia – the emperor frequently appears with a large globe and a *labarum*, while on gold coins he tends to hold only one item – and on the *folles* of Basil I and the Leo VI the emperors appear enthroned, which is never the case on gold coins after the eight century. While it is possible that different denominations were keyed to the interests of different segments of society, it is also clear that ultimately all denominations reached and addressed all levels of society. The main

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[35] Alexander issued silver coins with the image of Christ during his short reign in the early 10th century, this however was not followed by his successors.

[36] Leo VI did place the image of the Virgin on his *solidus*, but this was not followed by his successors. The Virgin also appeared on the *solidi* of Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes, and Romanos III crowning the respective emperors, and on the *nomisma* of the purple-born Theodora handing a *labarum* to the empress, but on these coins the Virgin does not appear as an independent type. Other exceptions of using the image of the Virgin as an independent type on gold coins is found on the joint coinage of Zoe and Theodora. See Grierson's comments about hierarchy of iconography, Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 170-171.

[37] Although, from the early tenth century on they also included the miniaturized effigy of the emperor, see for example the silver coins of Alexander, Ibid. , III/2, pl. XXXV, Alexander 3.

difference was the speed and frequency of access to the various denominations – members of the bureaucracy, nobility, military, and the top of the clerical hierarchy likely received the gold coins first and thus their message may have been intended primarily for them first, but it eventually reached all levels of society. Therefore, while it is possible to postulate that the army and the officials of the court were the first intended audience of gold coins since they received regular remuneration in gold, and that the populace at large was the primary intended audience of the copper coins, it must be acknowledged that ultimately all denominations circulated at all levels. Thus rather than privileging one denomination over another in communicating primary messages to Byzantine viewers, it may be more helpful to think about coins as part of a larger system of visual communication where the message is in part communicated by what is depicted and inscribed on the particular coin, and in part by the relationship of the coin legend and imagery to the larger system of all denominations available in any given reign.

Imperial Seals

It is useful to study imperial seals and coins together because they may have been produced in the same workshops as attested by the many close parallels in their iconography and paleography, as well as by the practice of regulating the weight of gold bullas based on numismatic units.[38] One significant difference, however, exists between the way coins and imperial seals were used. Coins were minted in large quantities in gold, silver, and copper - even small commemorative issues must have numbered in the thousands – and eventually reached all levels of society. Imperial seals, on the other hand were made not only from gold, and silver but also from lead, and wax, and they circulated on a more limited scale than coins. They were used to guarantee the privacy of

[38] Grierson argued for a close connection between the production of coins and seals, see Philip Grierson, "Byzantine Gold Bullae, With a Catalogue of those at Dumbarton Oaks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966): pp. 239-53, especially pp. 239-240 for the evidence of measuring gold seals in numismatic units. Also see C. Morrisson, "Numismatique et sigillographie: parentés et méthodes," *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 1 (1987): 3-14 and John Alexander Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" (Ph. D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1992), pp. 147-155, who emphasizes the independence of iconography of Christ on coins and seals suggesting that they may have been produced by different artisans.

correspondence and the identity of the sender, to authenticate documents, to provide authority to one's deputy in one's absence, and to secure goods intended for commercial exchange.[39] Unlike private seals, which carried monograms or invocative inscriptions of their owner or images of holy figures, middle Byzantine seals issued by the imperial chancellery carried the image of the emperor or empress, and from the mid-ninth century they were frequently accompanied by the figure of Christ or a saint. Officials of the imperial administration also used the imperial effigy for their seals in this period. The fourteenth century treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos informs us that the emperor used wax seals to secure letters addressed to his mother, wife, and son.[40] Although no imperial wax seals have survived, there is a rare wax seal of an official from ca. 1200 found on a document on Mt. Athos,[41] and there survive many signet rings and cone seals,[42] such as that of the Parkoimomenos Basil of the ninth or tenth century, and that of the empress Maria of Alania[43] which attest to the practice of using wax seals before the fourteenth century by members of the imperial family and bureaucracy. Wax seals, however, appear to have been used primarily in private contexts.[44] According to Pseudo-Kodinos imperial lead seals were used for correspondence with despots, patriarchs, and other archontes in the fourteenth century and the surviving material evidence of lead seals also indicates that they were affixed to official documents throughout the Byzantine period.[45] The *Book of Ceremonies* provides information about the recipients of gold bullas and discusses the appropriate weight commensurate with the dignity of each addressee, including the pope,

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[39] See Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , pp. ix-xii, 3-5; Vikan and Nesbitt, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing, and Weighing* , pp. 10-28; Nicholas Oikonomides, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Washington DC: 1985), pp. 8-9; ODB, III, pp. 1859-1860. Private seals were used by all levels of society for similar functions as imperial seals, but they also protected foodstuffs and other precious commodities in households.

[40] Cited in Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 5.

[41] ODB, III, p. 1859.

[42] For a discussion of signet rings, see Vikan and Nesbitt, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing, and Weighing* , pp. 16-20.

[43] For the ring of Basil, see Jannic Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris: Bibliothèqe Nationale, Musée du Louvre, 1992), no. 219, p. 309; for the ring of Maria, see Avtandil Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bilprogramme - Ikonographie - Stil*, ed. Gundram Koch (Wiesbaden: 2000), pp. 183-210, especially pp. 189-190, fig. 4.

[44] Vikan and Nesbitt, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing, and Weighing* , p. 22.

[45] Ibid. , p. 24.

foreign rulers, patriarchs, etc.[46] Thus, seals carrying the image of the emperor were primarily addressed to members of the imperial administration, the clergy, merchants, and foreign rulers and were most likely not seen by all levels of society, whereas the various denominations of coins eventually reached all levels of society.

Middle Byzantine Empresses on Coins and Seals

The effigies of eleven empresses appear on coins from the fourteen whose images survive in the period 780-1081: Irene the Athenian (780-802), Theodora the iconophile and her daughters Thekla, Anna, and Anastasia -although the latter two only appeared on a rare ceremonial issue- (830s-850s), Eudokia Ingerina (870-80s), Zoe Carbonopsina (914-19), the purple-born Zoe and Theodora (1042-56), Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1060s), and Maria of Alania (1070s). Seals are know for seven empresses: Irene the Athenian, Theodora the iconophile, Zoe Carbonposina, Anastasia-Theophano (late tenth century), the purple-born Zoe and Theodora, and Eudokia Makrembolitissa. A gold signet ring of Maria of Alania has come to light recently at the excavation of the monastery of Papikion in Northern Greece, her burial place. Seals also survive of two female imperial relatives from this period, that of Theoktiste, the mother of the empress Theodora of the ninth century and Maria, the mother of the empress Anastasia-Theophano, however these do not carry images of their owners, and neither does the signet ring of Maria of Alania. In addition to coins and seals, there survives a unique silver weight of unknown provenance of the purple-born Theodora from the eleventh century, and a unique medallion published by Ross that represents an empress and her son on one side, and Christ on the other.

The visual evidence will be presented chronologically in the following discussion in order to trace the changes in the iconography on coins and seals, and then conclusions will be drawn about the genre as a whole. First, however, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of effigies of empress on early Byzantine coins in order to situate

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[46] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 4.

numismatic and sphragistic representations of empresses from 780 to 1081 into the wider history of coin and seal imagery of empresses.[47]

Coins of Early Byzantine Empresses

Empresses appeared with great frequency on coins between 325 and 491: fifteen imperial women were placed on coins, many appearing on several denominations in this period.[48] After a hiatus of nearly a century, five empresses appeared on the lower denominations between 565 and 629,[49] after which the production of coins with effigies of empresses stopped altogether and was not revived until the regent Irene began to issue coins with her likeness in 780. Coins of early Byzantine empresses continued the tradition established by numismatic images of Roman imperial women.[50] Roman empresses had coins issued in their own name and with their own likeness. While the issuing authority was the emperor, often no direct references were made to the emperor either visually or textually on coins of a Roman empress. This kind of imagery continued on the issues of the women of the Constantinian house,[51] Fausta, Helena, Constantia, and Theodora in the second and third decades of the fourth century,[52] for whom coins were

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[47] No seals of empresses are extant from the early Byzantine period with the exception of two variants surviving of the lead seal of Licinia Eudoxia (435-455) that represents a bust of the empress on the obverse and a standing figure of Victory holding a tall cross on the reverse. Ibid. , no. 2759.

[48] These empresses were: Helena, Fausta, Constantia, Theodora (step-mother of Constantine), and Flacilla in the fourth century, Eudoxia, Eudokia, Galla Placidia, Honoria, Linicia Eudoxia, Pulcheria, Ariadne, Eufemia, and Zenonis in the fifth century. See Ulrich Kahrstedt, "Frauen auf antiken Münzen," *Klio* 10 (1910): pp. 261-314, especially p. 310, and Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press: 2001), p. 103, Table 2, who however only lists nine empresses for this period.

[49] These imperial women were: Sophia, Anastasia, Constantina, Leontia, Martina.

[50] For a discussion of the coins of early Byzantine empresses, see Richard Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1933), pp. 84-87, 101-104; Alfred Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks and Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: 1966); Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," ; James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , pp. 101-115.

[51] For a discussion of the coins of Constantinian empresses, see Diliana Nikolova Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" (Masters thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1998), pp. 62-65.

[52] See for example, John P. C. Kent, Bernhard Overbeck, and Armin U. Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* (Munich: 1973), no. 637, 648, 649 for Helena's coins; and no. 616, 644, 647 for Fausta's coins. For coins of Constantia, see Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* , pl. 11.

struck in most denominations (Figs. 12-15).[53] On the obverses the empresses are represented with profile busts accompanied by legends giving their names and titles. They are shown with fashionable hairstyles, pearl necklaces, and elegant robes of Roman matrons, and Helena is sometimes depicted with a diadem in her hair (Fig. 12).[54] The coin reverses represent female figures accompanied by the legends *Pietas*, *Securitas*, *Felicitas*, *Pax, Spes*, or *Salus*. While in most cases these female figures appear to be personifications of imperial virtues, occasionally it is difficult to discern whether the female figure represents a personification or the empress.[55] Sometimes empresses are shown with their children on the reverses of their coins.[56] Clearly the empresses appear on these coins as symbols of the health and prosperity of the empire, and sometimes as mothers to stake a claim on future imperial succession.[57] As Angelova has pointed out, the numismatic iconography of empresses in this period continues the old Roman tradition emphasizing the benefits of imperial victory and the importance of motherhood, and is complimentary to the numismatic iconography of emperors endowing the overall imperial message with a feminine aspect complementing the emphatically masculine, often martial imagery of emperors.[58]

After a hiatus of about fifty years empresses reappeared on coins of the Theodosian dynasty ca. 379.[59] Theodosian empresses also have coins minted in their name in several denominations, here however, a new kind of iconography is

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[53] James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 103.

[54] For a discussion of hairstyles of empresses see, Melita Emmanuel, "Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses, and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* 4/17 (1993-94): pp. 113-28.

[55] See for example the bronze medallion of Helena that shows her bust on the obverse and a female figure holding a child on her left arm and handing a ball to another child with her right hand with the legend PIETAS AVGVST, Fig. 13. Also see Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , no. 649.

[56] See the *follis* of Fausta in James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 106, pl. 7, or the *solidus* and a gold medallion of Fausta (Figs. 14-15). Also see Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , no. 647, 644.

[57] Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , pp. 576-578; Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity."

[58] Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity," pp. 59-60, 62.

[59] I consider empresses from Flacilla to Ariadne as Theodosian women, although the direct bloodline discontinued with Leo I. For family trees of the Theodosian house and the dynasty of Leo I, see Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 68, table 2, and p. 154, table 4.

established.[60] The profile busts of empresses are now invariably shown with a new hairstyle, which includes an imperial diadem, and they are clad in the *chlamys* held in place by a fibula, just like the emperors; thus an assimilation of the iconography of the empress to that of the emperor had taken place (Figs. 16-19).[61] Above the heads of several empresses the blessing hand of god appears (Fig. 17, 18).[62] Theodosian empresses are paired with different personifications on the coin reverses than was customary on the coins of Constantinian women. Victory, appears most frequently either as a seated figure writing on a shield inscribed with the *chi-rho*,[63] or standing holding a tall bejeweled cross. The seated Victory inscribing the shield is rendered as a voluptuous Roman lady with fashionable hairstyle and wings, and the accompanying legend provides the traditional *salus rei publicae* inscription at the beginning of the period, however, later it is changed to *Victoria auggg* (Figs. 16-17). The standing Victory holding the cross staff appears c. 420 and is paired either with the legend *bono rei publicae* or a *vota* inscription but from the mid-fifth century on receives the legend *Victoria* auggg (Fig. 18). On some issues starting ca. 430 the personifications of Rome and Constantinople are shown enthroned, and sometimes the reverse shows a cross in a wreath or a *chi-rho* surrounded by an inscription. The image of the emperor stomping on the figure of a defeated foe as a reverse type is introduced into coins of empresses in the mid-fifth century.[64] Some coins of Licinia Eudoxia provide a different iconography, where the

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[60] For a recent discussion of the coins of Theodosian empresses, see Philip Grierson and Melinda Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1992), pp. 133-135 (Eudoxia), 152-156 (Pulcheria, Eudocia), 170-171 (Verina), 176 (Ariadne), 180 (Zenonis), 229-232 (Galla Placidia), 242-243 (Justa Gratia Honoria), 244-246 (Licinia Eudoxia), 260-261 (Euphemia).

[61] See for instance the *solidus* of Flacilla in Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , no. 720; Kent Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), p. 34.

[62] Eudoxia, Eudokia, Pulcheria, Verina, Zenonis. See James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 105. For a discussion of the iconography of the hand of god, see Ioli Kalavrezou, "Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial Ceremonies and the Cult of Relics at the Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: 1997), pp. 53-80, who suggested that the hand of god included on coins of empresses may refer to the ceremonial of the imperial marriage conducted at the Augusteus Hall which included the portico of the Golden Hand, see pp. 63-64.

[63] The figure of Victory inscribing the shield is derived from a type used on coins of emperors, where Victory inscribes the *vota* of the emperor on the shield, Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity," p. 67.

[64] See Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* , p. 101.

empress is shown with a frontal bust on the obverse and represented enthroned on the reverse holding a *globus cruciger* and a cross staff surrounded by the legend *salus rei publicae* (Fig. 19).[65]

Brubaker and Tobler have argued that coins of Theodosian empresses attempt to align the new dynasty with the Constantinian house using images of imperial women in order to legitimize the dynasty through their imitation and association with Helena, the first Christian empress, and suggested that the employment of the *chi-rho*, the continuation of the title Augusta, the use of the long cross held by figures of Victory and the cross on the *globus cruciger* held by personifications of Constantinople forged these connections.[66] While Theodosian empresses undoubtedly have used the figure of Helena as a prototype to follow, this not only aimed at a legitimization of the new dynasty but also at fashioning a new image of the Augusta, now with an equal share in the imperial power, as was pointed out by Holum and Angelova. To this end, the numismatic representation of Theodosian empresses is markedly different from those of Constantinian empresses in that the imagery lacks maternal iconography[67] and contains direct Christian symbols absent from the coins of Constantinian empresses, such as the *chi-rho*, the cross, or the blessing hand of god appearing above the head of the empress. The variety of personifications that appeared alongside Constantinian empresses had also been reduced and Victory became the primary reverse type. Further, coin images of Theodosian empresses are also different in their figure style, for there is an assimilation of the iconography of empresses to the imagery of emperors, which was not the case earlier. This assimilation between emperor and empress leads to a suppression of the female body. This is also the period when individual features of imperial portraits gradually gave way to schematic, formulaic renderings while at the same time the prominence of imperial insignia increased in line with the more and more elaborate court

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[65] See Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , no. 762. On some issues Licinia Eudoxia appears in the *trabea*, the predecessor of the *loros*.

[66] Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , pp. 578-580; also see Kent Holum, "Pulcheria's Crusade AD 421-22 and the Theology of Imperial Victory," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 18 (1977): pp. 153-72.

[67] Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" , p. 68.

ceremonials.[68] When we look at the series of representations of Theodosian empresses on coins, little change can be detected in the rendering of the portrait busts. This kind of consistent imagery assimilates empresses of the same dynasty to one another, and to the emperors, creating an unbroken dynastic chain. Moreover, empresses are now represented as having an equal share in the *imperium* and now also participate directly in the ideology of imperial victory.[69]

A few rare, ceremonial coin issues were also struck to commemorate the wedding of imperial couples, such as the *solidus* of Theodosius II, which shows his son Valenitian III and Licinia Eudoxia blessed by the senior emperor (437) with the inscription: *Feliciter nubtiis* (Fig. 20).[70] Coins with virtually identical iconography were minted for Marcian and Pulcheria in the mid-fifth century,[71] and Anastasios and Ariadne in 491,[72] on these, however, it is Christ who blesses the imperial couple rather than the senior emperor. Burbaker and Tobler pointed out that in the last two cases it was through their marriage to an empress that the emperors Marcian and Anastasios acquired their positions as emperors, and they connected the remarkable appearance of Christ blessing the imperial couple with these unusual circumstances of imperial succession.[73]

After the demise of the Theodosian house, empresses disappeared from coins in 491, to reappear again only sporadically in the period 565-641. In this epoch imperial women do not appear on gold coins, but are included on the *folles*, and they no longer are shown by themselves but appear standing or enthroned together with their husbands, or on occasions as part of a series of busts representing the imperial family. The iconography of the empress enthroned together with her husband was introduced during the reign of Justin II in order to underscore the importance of his wife Sophia who is presented as having an equal share in the rule of the empire and whose name is also

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[68] The requirement of recognizability shifted from the individual to his/her office.

[69] See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* and Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity," pp. 67-100. Angelova argued that the participation of empresses in imperial victory was made possible by the finding of the true cross by Helena which guaranteed triumph for her son Constantine, see ibid, pp. 71-72.

[70] See Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , no. 757, or Grierson and Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , no. 395.

[71] See Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* , p. 210, fig. 81.

[72] See Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (London: 1982), pl. I, no. 3.

[73] Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , pp. 581-582.

inscribed on the coins (Fig. 21).[74] Later emperors followed this iconography but they used it only on coins struck at the beginning of their reigns and they stopped inscribing the name of the empress.[75] In this way numismatic images of empresses gradually lost their specificity and independence to become anonymous, abstract symbols of the unity and stability of the ruling imperial house and by extension of the empire.[76] Thus no coins were minted solely in the name of an empress, as was the custom before, and after 641 effigies of empresses disappeared from all denominations.[77]

It is clear that in the course of the three centuries between the early fourth and mid-seventh centuries the image of the empress underwent a series of important shifts, and became less and less an integral element of the official visual representation of the empire on coins. While in the fourth century effigies of empresses communicates specific, clearly articulated messages that formed part of a wider ideological statement about empire and imperial values and presented imperial authority in association with virtues customarily and exclusively linked with female figures, such as fecundity, health, general well-being, in the fifth century numismatic representations of empress shed the emphatically feminine qualities both in appearance and in overall message to be presented in a less contrasting manner with their male counterparts and to proclaim the one, overriding imperial message of the period, imperial Victory under the protection of Christ.[78] After the fifth century, empresses no longer appear on the coinage independently, and they themselves begin to be represented as attributes or

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[74] James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 110; McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 158-160. For illustration see, Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , p. 584, fig. 6. Sophia also appears on silver coins.

[75] See Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* , pl. 5, no. 87 and pl. 9, no. 152 (Leontia); pl. 7, no. 118 (Anastasia); pl. 10, no. 161-163 (Constantia). For Constantia, also see James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 111, pl. 13. For Martina, ibid, p. 112, pl. 14 and Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," , p. 586, fig. 8.

[76] See ibid, p. 587. Also see Aikaterine Christophilopoulou, "He antibasileia eis to Byzantion," *Symmeikta* 2 (1970): pp. 1-144, especially pp. 25.

[77] For representations of Epiphania and Martina on coins of Heraclius in the first half of the seventh century, see Constantin Zuckermann, "La petite Augusta et le Turc. Ephiphania-Eudocie sur les monnaies d'Héraclius," *Revue numismatique* 150 (1995): pp. 113-26, pl. VI; Constantin Zuckermann, "Au sujet de le petite Augusta sur les monnaies d'Heraclius," *Revue numismatique* 152 (1997): pp. 473-78; Paul Speck, "Épiphania et Martine sur les monnaies d'Héraclius," *Revue numismatique* 152 (1997): pp. 457-65; and Henri Pottier, "À propos de l'Augusta des folles d'Héraclius," *Revue numismatique* 152 (1997): pp. 467-72.

[78] The numismatic types associated with fifth century empresses, such as Victory inscribing on a shield, Victory holding a cross staff, Constantinople enthroned, etc. also appear on the coins of emperors, however, the iconography of emperors includes a much broader range of themes.

personifications of a very general kind accompanying the emperor to proclaim the solidity of his dynasty at the time of his accession.

Coins and Seals of Irene

Viewed against this background, the introduction of Irene's portrait into the coinage of the empire in 780 must have appeared as a significant departure from recent practice. She did not appear on the coins of her husband, Leo IV, yet she was immediately included on the coins of her son, Constantine VI, because he was only 10 years old when his father died unexpectedly. Irene acted as regent for the young emperor, and she exercised her power in order to counteract the ambitions of her brothers-in-law, who had aspirations for the imperial throne. Given Constantine's young age at the time of his father's death and the ambition of his uncles to seize the throne, it is not surprising that an image of Irene was included alongside the portrait of her son on the coins during the regency.[79] Her image on the coins thus articulates dynastic concerns — Irene does everything in her power to ensure the direct succession of her son, the designated heir to the throne — and presents herself as the guardian of lawful imperial succession.

Class Ia of the *solidi* that were struck at the beginning of the regency, show the empress and her son together on the obverse, Irene clad in the imperial *loros* and Constantine in the *chlamys*, while on the reverse three bearded figures, Constantine's predecessors (Leo IV, Constantine V, and Leo III), appear dressed in *chlamydes* (Fig. 22).[80] The frontal figures of Constantine and Irene hold globes with crosses on them, symbols of imperial power, and the empress also carries the scepter. The portraits are stereotyped, simplified, shorthand images that do not convey individual likeness. The oval, youthful faces of mother and son are virtually interchangeable, the differences are articulated not through the facial features but through hairstyle and insignia. The inscription is abbreviated and often difficult to make out; it begins on the reverse:

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[79] For a discussion of the various plots to elevate the half-brothers of Leo IV to the throne see: Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , pp. 367-417.

[80] I adapted the classification of coins and the transcription of coins legends from Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* .

ConSτAnτInOS C R'b' (Contantinos b[asileios] d[espotos]) and continues on the obverse: *SIRInIAVT'mIτHR' (s[un] Irini aug[usta] miter).*[81] This unusual arrangement, which relegates the name of the emperor to the reverse, the less important side, was probably done in order to ensure that Irene's name would appear on the obverse, in the more honorable position. In their iconography these coins are similar to Isaurian coins, which tend to be family affairs, rarely minted in the name of one ruler only. They usually depict at least two, sometimes as many as five members of the imperial family, all of different generations,[82] as for instance, on the *solidus* of Irene's husband, Leo IV, the emperor and his son, Constantine VI appear on the obverse, while on the reverse Leo's father and grandfather, the deceased ancestors, are shown (Fig. 23). The dynastic relationships are spelled out in the legend of the obverse: *LЄOnVSSЄϛϛon and COnsτAnτI O nЄO* (Leo son and grandson, Constantine junior), on the reverse *LЄON PAP COnsτAnτINOS PAτHR* (grandfather Leo, father Constantine).[83] It is to such dynastic images and legends that the regency coin of Irene derives from and responds to: it identifies the family ties between emperor and empress and makes it clear that Irene is justified in being present on the coin because she is the mother of the emperor. Although the deceased ancestors are not identified by legend, they remain present to remind the public of the illustrious ancestry of Constantine VI.

The coin of Leo IV mentioned above represents the reigning emperors, Leo IV and Constantine VI in *chlamydes* while the deceased ancestors appear in *loroi.* It is noteworthy that although the *loros* was an important and prestigious imperial dress, between 717 and 813 the reigning senior male emperor never appears in the *loros* on coins.[84] Thus, the *loros* on Isaurian coins helps to communicate the dynastic claims of

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[81] Ibid., p. 338.

[82] Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, pp. 152-153. Grierson suggested that this Isaurian practice was the result of the influence of the naming practice of Muslim rulers, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, p. 9.

[83] This reading of the inscription was first suggested by Zacos and Veglery, see G. Zacos and A. Veglery, "Enigmatic Inscriptions on Byzantine Coins," *Numismatic Circular* LXIII (1955): pp. 107-12, especially p. 107-109, and G. Zacos and A. Veglery, "New Light on the Solidus of Leo IV," *Numismatic Circular* 69 (1961): 30-31. Their interpretation was followed by Bellinger and Grierson, see Alfred R. Bellinger, "Byzantine Notes," *ANSMN* 13 (1967): pp. 126-66, especially p. 126, and Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, p. 326.

[84] After the accession of Leo III in 717 until the accession of Leo V in 813. Exceptions are the Neapolitan gold coins (*solidus, tremississ*) of Leo III, and the rare silver coins of Constantine V from Naples and

the reigning emperor: it distinguishes the living emperors from the deceased ones while at the same time also connects the different generations. Irene, however, differs in her use of the imperial costume, for although she was a living empress she selected the *loros* as her garment of choice. The *loros* articulated her secondary status, real or nominal, while affirmed her rights in the imperial hierarchy as regent mother and co-ruler.[85] Further, the *loros* also emphasized a distinction in gender and focused attention on the figure of the empress, while at the same time the *chalmydes* of the male figures created visual connections between the figure of Constantine VI and his forefathers emphasizing their connection by blood.

The *milaresia* struck during the regency were inscribed with the legend *CONSτAnτInOЄCΘЄЧbASILIS* on the obverse, while a cross on steps appeared with the circular legend *IhsЧSXRIS τЧsnica* on the reverse (Fig. 24). The design followed the tradition of Isaurian *milaresia* without any significant change in the legend or type.[86] The first issue of the *folles*, Class Ia followed the iconography of Class Ia of the *solidi* with some minor adjustments. The copper coins did not display inscriptions and they incorporated the traditional mark of value with some immobilized letters on the reverse below the bust images of the three ancestors (Fig. 25).[87]

Just as on the early gold coins of the regency described above, the empress also placed herself before and above her son on other occasions by means of protocol, making

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Rome. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 269-270, 315-6, 322. No *loros* is found for reigning male emperors of the same period on imperial seals and on dated seals of imperial officials between 717 and 802 in Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* . In the eighth century the only junior emperor to appear in the *loros* is Nikephoros, the son of Artavasdus, see: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 283-289. In the ninth century it becomes more common to use the *loros* for junior emperors (Theophylact, the son of Michael I and Theophilos, son of Michael II are depicted in the *loros* while their fathers appear in the *chlamys* on the other side of the coin). Michael II also reintroduced the numismatic image of the reigning male emperor clad in the *loros*, which had been absent from Constantinopolitan coins since the early eighth century. His son, Theophilos followed this iconography on his own issues. Ibid. , III/1, pp. 363-370, 387-404, 411-416, 424-440. Despite the above evidence, Grierson suggested that the *loros* and *chlamys* did not have "specific implications of rank." See Ibid. , III/1, p. 113.

[85] Christophilopoulou, "He antibasileia eis to Byzantion," , p. 25 concluded that Irene was regent and co-empress with her son Constantine VI.

[86] See for instance the milaresia of Leo III and Constantine V, Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pl. II-III no. 22a.1-22c.4 and pl. VIII no. 5.2-5.5.

[87] See Ibid. , III/1, pl. XIV, no. 5.1-5.2.

it clear that she exercised the power pushing him carefully aside. These tactics worked while Constantine was young; however, when he turned about 20, he participated in a conspiracy to end his mother's prolonged regency.[88] Class Ib of the coins have been linked with these tumultuous events. They follow the same iconography as found on Class Ia but with some minor differences: here the empress does not hold the *globus cruciger*, and the inscription now starts on the obverse, thus Constantine appears as the more important figure since only he holds the symbol of imperial power, and it is his name that now is placed on the obverse (Fig. 26). Class Ib of the *folles* also follow suit: they represent the empress without the *globus cruciger*, but otherwise their iconography does not change (Fig. 27).[89] Although the dating of these coins has been extensively debated by numismatists, the most convincing argument places them in the period between November 790 to January 792, when Irene was banished from the palace and Constantine was sole emperor.[90] But despite the subtle visual clues that were introduced into the new issue in order to articulate a change in the exercise of imperial power, the most obvious visual devices were not employed on the new issue of Constantine: the effigy of Constantine VI remained that of a beardless youth despite the fact that he was now of age and exercising full imperial power, and the image of his mother remained on the coins. This is surprising since Constantine VI, once he established his independent power away from his mother's influence, could have minted coins fully in line with Isaurian iconography that included a mature, bearded image of him on the obverse and effigies of his father and forefathers on the reverse.

Constantine, however, did not keep his mother away from the reigns of power for long. As Theophanes reports:

> On 15 January (792), after receiving entreaties from his mother and many persons in authority, the emperor once again pronounced her empress and she was acclaimed along with him as in the beginning, 'Long live Constantine and Irene!' Everyone acquiesced in this, but the *thema* (regiment) of the Armeniacs resisted and rebelled.[91]

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[88] For the events reported by Theophanes Confessor, see Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, A.M. 6283, pp. 638-639.
[89] See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/1, pl. XIV, no. 6.1-6.2.
[90] Ibid., p. 336.
[91] Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 642.

Irene's recall to the palace has been linked with the second issue of Constantine's reign (Class II). These coins are in a higher relief and generally better quality in design and execution than the first issue. They show the bust of Irene on the obverse and that of Constantine on the reverse. The iconography of the portraits is similar to the ones on Class Ia and Ib with some minor differences: Constantine holds the *akakia* in his left hand (shown as a cylindrical bar with knobs at its ends) while he carries the *globus cruciger* in his right, and Irene again holds both the *globus cruciger* and the scepter (Fig. 28). The legends are simpler than before, they state: *IRInH AΓOVStI, ConStAntInOSbAS'*.[92] Grierson proposed that the empress is addressed in the dative, evoking acclamations addressed to the emperors, suggesting that the coin was minted for Irene.[93] That Irene was placed on the obverse of the coins is also supported by the fact that a control mark appears on many coins after the name of Constantine indicating that this was the reverse of the coin. The second issue of the *folles*, Class II also displays the same iconography, however, here the effigy of Constantine VI is placed above the mark of value on the reverse, making it absolutely clear that Irene appears in the position of greater authority (Fig. 29). These gold and copper coins were probably struck between 792 and 797, during the last five years of the joint reign of Constantine VI and his mother. Zacos and Veglery suggested that this iconography reflects at least indirectly the change of imperial policy regarding the use of religious images.[94] In 787 Irene convoked a church council in Nicaea, which put an end to the imperial policy of iconoclasm by condemning it as a heresy and anathematized iconoclastic emperors and clerics. While religious images were restored after 787, this is not reflected directly on the coinage, for

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[92] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 341.

[93] Ibid. , p. 339 and Cécile Morrisson, "L'impératrice Irène (780-802)," *Le Club français de la médaille. Bulletin* 82/83 (1984): pp. 118-20, especially p. 492.

[94] Zacos and Veglery argued that seals of officials depicting Irene on one side and Constantine VI on the other without ancestors, similar to the second gold issue, must date after the Council of Nicea in 787, since the presence of iconoclast ancestors on the seals of Irene and Constantine would not fit with the new iconophile policy of the empire. Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 354. While this is possible, it is clear that the ancestors were not dropped from the coins until 792, about five years after the reinstatement of the veneration of images. Thus a direct correlation cannot be established. Furthermore, it is more likely that Constantine VI initiated the elimination of the ancestors from the coins, for he came into full power in 790.

no religious images were introduced into the coin iconography. Yet, it is possible, that one reason behind eliminating the predecessors of Constantine VI from the coins of the empire was because they were iconoclasts, and their presence was no longer desirable, as suggested by Zacos and Veglery.

Irene seized the throne on August 19, 797 after having her son arrested and blinded.[95] Theophanes reports:

> Frightened, they [i.e. the empress's men] besieged him with their pleas and, after putting him on board the *chelandion*, reached the city on Saturday morning, 15 August, and confined him to the Porphyra, where he had been born. About the ninth hour they blinded him in a cruel and grievous manner with a view to making him die at the behest of his mother and her advisers. The sun was darkened for seventeen days and did not emit its rays so that ships lost course and drifted about. Everyone acknowledged that he sun withheld its rays because the emperor had been blinded. In this manner his mother Irene acceded to power.[96]

Irene's rule in turn ended with a coup d'état on November 1, 802.[97] During her 5-year reign Irene issued gold *solidi*[98] and copper *folles* in Constantinople and Syracuse.[99] Both

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[95] For the date of this event and the erroneous date given by Theophanes, see: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , pp. 336-337. For the most recent historical evaluation of the reign of Irene see: Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 73-94 and Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzanz unter Eirene und Konstantin VI. (780-802)*, vol. 2, *Berliner Byzantinische Studien* (Frankfurt: 1996), with further bibliography.

[96] Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , A.M. 6289.

[97] For the fall of Irene see Lilie, *Byzanz unter Eirene und Konstantin VI. (780-802)* , pp. 105-112 with bibliography of earlier literature.

[98] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* III/1 pp. 73-94. The purity of Irene's *solidi* was 95.9% thus about 23 carats, in keeping with the purity of Byzantine gold coinage of her immediate predecessors and followers, see Cécile Morrisson et al., *L'or monnayé I, Purification et altérations de Rome à Byzance, Cahiers Ernest-Babelon 2* (Paris: 1985), II, p. 210. While silver coins were struck during the joint reign of Constantine VI and Irene, Irene did not issue silver coins on her own. This is due to the fact that sliver *milaresia* were only minted for joint rulers in the eighth century. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 63.

[99] There is little evidence for the minting of *solidi* in the Syracusan mint of Sicily during Irene's immediate predecessors. A single semissis of Leo IV and Constantine VI was known to Grierson, which suggests a small output. Copper coins of Leo IV are more ample from Sicily, however, after the reign of Leo IV no *folles* were struck until 802. See Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* , pp. 166-167. The Syracusan *solidi* of Irene were lighter than those minted in the imperial mint in Constantinople, as customary in the period. The average weight of the Constantinopolitan *solidi* was c. 4.32 – 44.6g, while those of Syracuse c. 3.89g. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* III/1, p. 26, p. 349-50, pl. XV. For a discussion of the coins minted in Western mints of the eighth-ninth centuries, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1 pp. 24-28, and 82-94.

sides of the *solidi* depict her with a frontal bust showing a stylized, ageless face that bears little resemblance to her actual physiognomy (Fig. 30). These images continue the iconography established for her effigy on the coins struck during the regency. She holds the globe and the cross scepter and wears the loros and a crown with two pinnacles and a cross. The legend on both sides reads: *€IRInH bASILISSH.*[100] The title and its spelling differs from the legends of her joint coinage with Constantine VI where she used the title *meter Augusta* and *Augusta*.[101]

The new title, *basilissa*, emphasized her new position as sole ruler,[102] and was parallel to the title *basileus,* which she used in her legislation.[103] While the title clearly articulated a change in her position from mother of the emperor to reigning empress, it was also a choice that fit into the current use of imperial titles. Emperors had started to use the title *basileus* as part of their official imperial title from ca. 629. Leo III introduced it into silver coin legends in the eighth century, and Constantine VI and Irene adopted it for the use on gold coins during the regency.[104] Irene's use of the title *basilissa* followed the trend established by male imperial titles,[105] yet, it involved more than just the adoption of a current trend. The title *basileus* was used for the first time on Byzantine gold coins during the regency of Irene, where Constantine is given the title

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[100] For a discussion of epigraphy on eighth century Byzantine coinage, see ibid III/1, pp. 183-189.

[101] For the title Augusta see Elizabeth Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," *Byzantion* (1976): pp. 243-91, especially p. 276, and Stojan Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," *Byzantinoslavica* 2 (1966): pp. 308-43, especially p. 322. However, Class I of Irene's *solidi* in Syracuse also used the title Augusta. See: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* III/1, p 350.

[102] Bensammar argued that although the title *basilissa* was a secondary title in official documents until the eleventh century, Irene selected this title in order to emphasize her new position as sole ruler. See Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," , pp. 278-282 and Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," , p. 340. For a critique of Bensammar's methodology and conclusions see Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* (New York: 1999), pp. 96-119.

[103] For Irene's employment of the male title *pistos basileus* see Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," , p. 340. Also see J. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graecorum* (Athens: 1931), I, p. 45.

[104] See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, 176. The title *basileus* was used in official documents and literary texts for centuries before it became part of the official imperial title employed on imperial decrees and diplomatic documents. See L. Bréhier, "L'origine des titres impériaux à Byzance: basileus et despotes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* XV (1906): 161-78; Franz Dölger, "Die Entwicklund der byzantinischen Kaisertitulatur und die Datierung von Kaiserdarstellungen in der byzantinischen Kleinkunst," in *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson II* (1953; Reprinted in F. Dölger, Byzantinische Diplomatik, Speyer, 1956, pp. 130-151), pp. 985-1005.

[105] James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 125.

bas(ileus) and Irene *augusta*. This was also the first numismatic occasion that one ruler only was designated by this title, since on previous silver coins it was the joint rulers who were given the title in the plural, as *basileis*. Irene appropriated the title first introduced into the gold coins of her son, thereby making it clear that as *basilissa* she was supplanting him, the emperor, in every respect. The title *basilissa* also recommended itself because it was a neutral term familiar to the Byzantine public from literary sources where it was a frequent designation for empresses.[106] Irene imbued this title with her particular message; the title underscored the complete transfer of power from son to mother and presented Irene as an independent ruler in her own right, yet it did this with the help of a widely used traditional title that had been applied to wives of Byzantine emperors for a long time. Thus, Irene's independent rule was also sanctioned on the grounds of her having been wife to a previous emperor.

The repetition of the same imperial type on both sides of a coin is unprecedented on Byzantine coinage before Irene.[107] Because of this iconography, the coins of Irene's sole reign stand in stark contrast with one particular aspect of Isaurian coinage, for her coins do not depict her imperial predecessors.[108] Irene's new device may be linked with Byzantine numismatic iconography of the eighth century. The early gold coins of her father-in-law, Constantine V in 741-751 used identical busts on both sides, yet, these do not represent the same emperor. The legends make it clear that Constantine V appears on the obverse and his father, Leo III on the reverse (Fig. 31).[109] It is likely that Irene had been familiar with this issue of her father-in-law, and these coins may have inspired her pictorial formula. The duplication of her portrait may also reflect a different visual tradition. As Henry Maguire suggested, the repetition of an image within the same context (e.g. the image of a saint on a garment) may be used to reinforce its message in

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[106] See Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," , p. 279 n. 36.
[107] However, some later emperors, Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II followed this iconography, see Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* , p. 154 and Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 367, 375, 394.
[108] For comments on the repetition of Irene's portrait on both sides of the coins see: Brubaker and Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," p. 390.
[109] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 292-92, 299, pl. VIII.

works of the pre-iconoclastic period.[110] Similarly, Irene's double portrait amplifies the message of her image through a simple, yet highly effective visual device. If this device is seen in the framework of Isaurian numismatic iconography, one may suggest that the double portrait allowed Irene to present herself both in the position of imperial predecessor and reigning monarch on the two sides of the same coin.[111] She lacked a proper imperial predecessor since she was not a blood descendant of the Isaurian line, and it was highly undesirable to include images of her son or husband on her coins, since they would have been reminders of the bloody circumstances under which she took office effectively terminating the Isaurian dynasty. That she attempted to portray herself as her own predecessor is also supported by her choice of imperial garment, since the *loros* was used on Isaurian coins before the reign of Irene exclusively for representations of the deceased ancestors.

The *loros* may have communicated another message about Irene, emphasizing her imperial munificence. The *loros* was a privilege of the imperial office derived from the costume of the Roman consul.[112] Memory of its consular origin may have been alive in the eighth century, since the *Book of Ceremonies*, compiled in the tenth century mentions that the *loros* was derived from the dress of the consul.[113] Consulship in the late empire was an office that was associated with munificence, for the consuls were responsible for

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[110] Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 119-120, and 136-137, 145.

[111] I owe this formulation to the suggestions of Leslie Brubaker and Anna Kartsonis.

[112] Michael Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081-1261* (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1969), p. 66 and Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , p. 116-124. Also see: Wessel and Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* , pp. 424-443, and E. Condurachi, "Sur l'origine et l'évolution du loros impérial," *Arta si archeologia* 11-12 (1935-1936): pp. 37-45. By the sixth century the *chlamys* lost its military association and the *tablion* differentiated the civilian *chlamys* from the military *plaudamentum*, see: ODB, II, p. 424. La Barre Starensier characterized the difference between the *loros* and *chlamys* in the Macedonian period as follows: "The conceptual difference between the two classes of garments lies in the estate that confers the privilege. The insignia of office granted at coronation or investiture are placed over an altar and blessed by the patriarch. While in fact the church thereby merely dignifies an act of state, in principle the insignia of office are a continuing visible testament to a covenant with God, which legitimizes the power of office. The parade dress, on the other had, was a privilege conferred by and a uniform prescribed by the state. As the emperor was the personification of the state the parade dress of his officers was an extension of his person." Adele La Barre Starensier, "An Art Historical Survey of the Byzantine Silk Industry" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1982), p. 190.

[113] Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829), pp. 637-639. For commentary see: J. D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, vol. 144, *Numismatic Notes and Monographs* (New York: 1959), pp. 36-37.

financing gladiatorial combats and beast hunts in the circus for the entertainment of the populace. The *loros* was also associated with imperial munificence in the tenth century, as the *Book of Ceremonies* records that the emperor exercised his philanthropy at Easter by distributing largess while he was clad in the *loros*. The *loros* was also linked with imperial munificence during the celebration of the Pentecost in the tenth century; for this occasion the *Book of Ceremonies* reports that the emperor arrived to Hagia Sophia dressed in the *loros* and did not change into the *chlamys* until after depositing the imperial gifts on the altar of the sanctuary.[114] Perhaps Irene's preference for the *loros* highlights imperial munificence or philanthropy as the central virtue of her imperial persona.[115] Other evidence also suggests that philanthropy played a significant role in Irene's imperial policy, e.g. her remission of taxes for the populace of the capital, her patronage of homes for the elderly, the poor, the sick and travelers, her provisions for a cemetery of the poor, and the establishment of a bakery in the hippodrome attest to this.[116]

The employment of the *loros* allowed Irene to continue the iconography established for her image on the coins of her son, giving her independent coinage that highly coveted Byzantine virtue, the perception of established tradition. At the same time it linked her with the prominent pre-iconoclastic coinages of Justinian II and Theodosius III of the early eighth century, who, unlike their iconoclast followers, are depicted in the *loros* during their reigns. Coins of the second reign of Justinian II, with the emperor clad in the *loros*, depict him holding a *globus cruciger* in his left hand inscribed with the word *PAX*.[117] This is a reference to the restoration of Justinian's rule, and to the emperor's role

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[114] Kathleen Corrigan, "The Ivory Scepter of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology," *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978): pp. 407-16, especially pp. 411-412, Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 9, pp. 58-71.

[115] Jennifer Ball came to similar conclusions regarding the *loros* in the middle Byzantine period. She argued that the wearing of the *loros* at Easter reinforced the continuity of consulship and largess at Easter thereby emphasizing munificence and philanthropy as a chief imperial virtue. See: Jennifer L. Ball, "The Loros in Image and Text" (Abstracts of Papers, Byzantine Studies Conference, Harvard University, October 26-29, 2000), pp. 122-23. I thank Jennifer Ball for generously sharing some references with me.

[116] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , p. 93, no. 93.

[117] For a discussion of the coins of Justinian II, see: Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II* and Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , II/2 pp. 644-663; also see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 134-139, which analyzes the image of Christ on the coins of Justinian II.

as the creator and protector of peace in his dominion.[118] The presence of the word *pax* on the coins of Justinian II may have induced Irene to follow the coin iconography of his predecessor, since her name (Greek for peace) was to be spelled out in the coin legends identifying the empress and also underscoring her role as the founder and safeguard of the peace of the empire (e.g. peace within the orthodox church).

The iconography of Irene's *solidi* continues on the *folles*, these, however, depict her only on the obverse, while the reverse shows the traditional mark of value, M accompanied by the immobilized date XXX NNN (Fig. 32).[119] Irene's return to using only the mark of value on the reverses of her *folles* shows a departure from the practice of her immediate predecessors, Leo IV and Constantine VI, who invariably included imperial busts above the mark of value on the reverses.[120] It is clear that the place above the mark of value was of secondary importance and Irene did not wish to place her image there.[121] Rather, she decided to use the traditional way of decorating the *follis,* but she also made sure that her image appeared on it as clearly and visibly as possible. Thus she improved the quality of their fabric and also increased their size. These features may reflect the difference in the intended primary audiences of the gold and copper coins. Irene had reasons to emphasize her authority to the military and aristocracy that had challenged her in the past.[122] Thus the blatant repetition of her portrait on gold coins may

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[118] See George P. Galavaris, "The Symbolism of the Imperial Costume as Displayed on Byzantine Coins," *ANS Museum Notes* 8 (1958): pp. 99-117, especially pp. 105-106; Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II* , pp. 88-89, 96; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , II/2, p. 645.

[119] Irene's *folles* are heavier than those of her predecessors and are characterized by an improved fabric. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 70. For the immobilized date, see Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* , p. 503.

[120] See: Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pls. XII-XIV. The copper issues of Leo III and Constantine V also used the device of placing the busts of predecessors above the mark of value, but on some issues they also used the mark of value by itself on the reverse, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pls. III-IV, IX.

[121] The figures appearing above the mark of value on the reverses of the coins of Leo IV were always the deceased ancestors with the ruling emperor and his son appearing on the obverse. On the early coins of Constantine VI ancestors appeared above the mark of value. On later issues the bust of Constantine VI was placed above the mark of value, while the bust of Irene appeared on the obverse. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pls. XII-XIV.

[122] For a brief overview of the series of plots against the rule of Irene see Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , pp. 417-424.

have been intended primarily as an emphatic message to those who defied her at home and even abroad, while the copper coins communicated a more traditional message aimed primarily at the populace of the capital.

No imperial seals[123] survive from the period of the regency that depict Irene and Constantine VI together. There is however, a seal of Constantine VI that displays a representation of the emperor identical in design and legend with the image on the second issue of the regency, Class II (Fig. 33).[124] The other side of this seal has been left blank, which, in the view of John Nesbitt, always indicates some kind of a tension or crisis in the exercise of power,[125] and therefore the coin should most likely be dated to ca. 790-792, when Constantine exercised power alone. *Kommerkiarioi*, customs officials stationed in the provinces overseeing the exchange of products with foreign merchants,[126] used effigies of emperors on their seals, and several such specimens survive from Irene's regency. Most of them use the design found on Class Ia-b of the copper coins of the regency, with Constantine and Irene shown as busts donning the *chlamys* and the *loros*, respectively, while on the reverse the three busts of imperial ancestors appear above the inscription identifying the *kommerkia*, on occasion giving the name of the official (Fig. 34).[127] The empress's crown is rendered with four pinnacles as on the coins, but the figures do not appear to hold any insignia. Veglery and Zacos identified indiction signs on all these seals, which date them between 783/4 and 787/788.[128] It is noteworthy, that there survives another seal from the *kommerkia* of Thessalonike, which uses the same imperial effigies as the previous seals, however, the reverse of the seal is completely

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[123] For a discussion of how Byzantine lead seals were produced, see Philip Grierson, "Byzantine Gold Bullae, With a Catalogue of those at Dumbarton Oaks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966): pp. 239-53, especially p. 244, and Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , pp. ix-xii.

[124] See ibid. , I/1, p. 37, no. 38. There is also a lead token with the same image of Constantine VI on one side and a cross on steps on the other, see ibid. , I/1, p. 37, no. 39.

[125] Personal communication with John Nesbitt in March 2001. I thank John Nesbitt for allowing me to inspect seals in his keeping at the Dumbarton Oaks collection and for answering my questions.

[126] See ibid. , I/1, pp. 135-140, for a list of warehouses controlled by kommerkiarioi, see ibid, pp. 162-197. Also see ODB, II, pp. 1141-1142.

[127] See ibid. , pp. 350-354, no. 273-276, and Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 52, no. 42, and Nicholas Oikonomides and John Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: 1991), p. 162, no. 71.19.

[128] Oikonomides, however, was unable to discern an indiction sign on no. 275 of Zacos and Veglery, see Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 52, no. 42.

filled by the inscription leaving no room for the representations of the deceased ancestors.[129] Zacos and Veglery suggested that the lack of the deceased ancestors indicates that the seal was produced after the Second Council of Nicaea in 787. While this is possible, this date remains tentative because the seal regrettably does not include an indication mark that would provide a secure date. Moreover, it is also possible that the exclusion of the iconoclast imperial predecessors would indicate the personal preference of the official Thomas, who instead, placed his own name on the reverse of the seal. The seal of a *kommerkiarios* from the regency of Irene belonged to a certain Eustathios follows the iconography of Class II of the copper coins, with Irene appearing on the obverse alone, while Constantine's smaller bust appears on the reverse above the inscription.[130] Although this seal also lacks an indiction sign, its similarity to coins provides a secure date of 792-797 for its production. A further seal of Irene has been recorded by Zacos and Veglery produced in the *kommerkia* of Thessalonike in 798/799, which shows a bust of the empress alone on the obverse and an inscription on the reverse (Fig. 37).[131] The seals of *kommerikarioi* issued during Irene's sole reign duplicate her effigy from the coins on the obverse and show inscriptions identifying the *kommerkia* on the reverse.[132] All three specimens carry indiction marks dating them to 800/801 and 801/802. Irene's imperial seals issued during her sole reign bear the same effigy and legend found on her *solidi*, however, their reverse has been left blank (Fig. 35).[133] One thin lead token survives that replicates the decoration of her *solidi* exactly in design and in rendering the imperial portrait on both sides (Fig. 36). Zacos and Veglery argued convincingly, that this piece was not used as a seal but was most likely a proof for the *solidus*.[134] .

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[129] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , III/1, p. 354, no. 277.
[130] Ibid. , p. 355, no. 278. They offer the date 787-797, which in my view can be narrowed down.
[131] Ibid. , p. 356, under no. 279. Unfortunately they do not provide an illustration of this seal, nor do they provide a reference to its provenance. Dating is secured by the indiction mark Z.
[132] Ibid. , pp. 355-357, no. 279-280, and Oikonomides and Nesbitt, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art. Italy, North of the Balkans, North of the Black Sea* , p. 162, no. 71.20.
[133] Ibid. , pp. 38, no. 40, also see Alisa Bank, *Iskusstvo vizantii v sobraniiakh SSSR: Katalog vystavki* (Moscow: 1977), II, p. 16, no. 448.
[134] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 39, no. 41.

Coins and Seals of Theodora

Between the fall of Irene in 802 and the rise of the Macedonian dynasty in 867, Theodora's effigies on coins and seals offer the only extant representations of empresses in any medium, and are the only surviving images of Theodora produced in her lifetime. They follow the iconography established for the numismatic representation of empresses by her predecessor, Irene. However, Theodora's images articulate a different view of dynastic policy that assigns increasing importance to the wife and daughters of the emperor in representing the empire, yet downplays the significance of the empress in favor of the imperial family as a whole.

The rare *solidus* of Theodora's husband, Theophilos[135] shows: Theophilos, Theodora and their daughter Thekla on the obverse and the younger daughters Anna and Anastasia on the reverse (Fig. 38).[136] The facial features of the figures are generic, without any reference to individual appearance. Distinguishing features are size, hairstyle, costumes, and the presence of a beard in the case of Theophilos. The legends give their names only.[137] Most scholars agree that it was probably a ceremonial issue[138] minted after the deaths of the first son Constantine and his sister Maria and before the birth of the second son Michael III, thus between 838 and 840; but 833 and 837 have also been suggested.[139] Various ideas have been offered to explain why these coins were

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[135] Only known from 3 specimens that are found in Paris, Dumbarton Oaks, and Turin. For the Dumbarton Oaks specimen, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 428, pl. XXII, no. 4.

[136] The emperor wears a *chlamys* and crown, the empress and the princesses sport *loroi* and crowns with pendilia.

[137] *ΘEK'ΘEOF'ΘE'* and **AnnASAnSTASIA*

[138] Grierson suggested that there were no ceremonial coins in the Isaurian period and in the early ninth century. He states, that they can be "identified only by their rarity and unusual designs; we do not know the precise occasions of their issue." Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 20. Theophilos revived the Roman tradition of commemorative issues, ibid p. 98.

[139] Ibid. , III/1, pp. 409, 415-16; Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , no. 138, p. 203. Schlumberger, however, suggested that the three princesses depicted on the coin were the first three children of Theophilos and Theodora and placed the date of the emission to 832, because in his opinion Maria was born in 833, and in her absence, the date of the coin should be earlier than her birth. Gustave Schlumberger, "Un monnaie d'or byzantine inédite," in *Mélanges d'archeologie Byzantine* (Paris: 1895), pp. 141-45, especially pp. 144-145.

issued: it celebrates the coronation of the princesses,[140] or memorialize Theophilus' sack of Zapetra[141] or the birth of the son, Michael III, [142] or possibly it might be a response to the fall of Amorion (the birth place of Theophilos' family) in 838 projecting imperial strength in the absence of a male heir (for at this time the imperial couple only had daughters but no sons).[143] It is unlikely that this issue would commemorate the birth of a male heir. It is unprecedented that only the daughters would be included on an official image that celebrates the birth of a son. It is also doubtful that such imagery would memorialize a triumph or a military loss. While it is possible that the issue celebrates the coronation of the princesses as Augustae, I would like to propose another possibility: perhaps it commemorates the building of the Karianos palace by Theophilos for his daughters, which probably dates to 839.[144] Although the reports about it are

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[140] Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* (Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 283. In an earlier article Treadgold argued that these coins constituted "a substantive issue cut short by the birth of not Michael but of Constantine. The three daughters appear because they were recently born and newly crowned. Constantine does not appear because he was not either born or dead, and the remaining daughters Maria and Pulcheria, who must have been born after Constantine, were not born either." Warren Treadgold, "The Problem of the Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16, no. 1 (1975): pp. 325-41, especially p. 333. Cécile Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1970), II, p. 515. The only evidence for the elevation of Anna and Anastasia to the position of Augusta is offered by these coins. Thekla's elevation is documented by textual sources. Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," , p. 335, n. 193.

[141] This triumph was celebrated by a triumphal procession in Constantinople in 837, see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , pp. 293-295.

[142] Andreas Dikigoropoulos, "The Constantinapolitan Solidi of Theophilus," *DOP* 18 (1964): pp. 353-261, especially p. 361; Alfred Bellinger, "The Emperor Theophilus and the Lagbe Hoard," *Berytus* 2 (1944): pp. 102-06, especially p. 104.

[143] Vasso Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries" (PhD, Wolfson College, Oxford, 1991), pp. 37-38; Cécile Morrisson, "Théodora, impératrice, régente et sainte," *Le Club français de la médaille. Bulletin* 86/87 (1985): pp. 162-65, especially p. 164.

[144] The Karianos in the palace is the location where Theodora gave a feast to the victims of iconoclasm on the feast of the orthodoxy, see R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine. Dévelopment urbain et répertoire topographique, Archives de l'orient chrétien, 4A* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1964), p. 114. Some sources place the Karianos inside the Great Palace, while others situate it near the Blachernae. Janin concluded based on this evidence that there were two palaces called Karianos at the time of Theophilos, one in the Great Palace and one near the Blachernae, ibid. pp. 114, 132. Treadgold rejected Janin's suggestion that there were two palaces called Karianos, see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , p. 446, no. 426. Berger, on the other hand, suggested that the Karianos palace that Theophilos built for his daughters was the one located near the Blachernae, which was later turned into a convent, see Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos, Poikila Byzantina 8* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1988), pp. 476-477. Theodora and his daughters were forced to retire here after 856 and this institution appears to have functioned as a hospice for the elderly in the tenth century. According to another story, after Michael came of age, he forced Theodora and his sisters to retire to the Gastria convent in 856, where she died and was laid to rest in 867. Her body was placed in the same tomb with her daughters Thekla, Anastasia, and Pulcheria. The Life of Theodora reports: ". . . and involuntarily and against her will left the palace for the Gastria monastery with her four daughters Pulcheria, Thekla,

somewhat contradictory,[145] this is the only recorded event in Theophilos' reign associated solely with his daughters that could have occasioned a coin showing the princesses with their parents. Regardless of the specific occasion for the issue, its message is clear: it emphasizes the importance of Theophilos' family, celebrates Theodora's motherhood even in the absence of a son, and establishes a hierarchy between the daughters. Although these coins were most likely not distributed widely, for they survive in a small number, they clearly addressed concerns about the succession.

Theophilos's and Theodora's son, Michael was born in 840 and soon became co-emperor, and was shown as such on Theophilos' coins. Theophilos, however, died two years after his son and heir was born in 842, and Theodora became regent. The first gold issue was struck showing her, the two year old Michael and his oldest sister Thekla who

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Anastasia, and Anna. The emperor Michael tonsured three of her daughters and clothed them in the holy garb of monastic life, assigning them to the Karanios monastery. His mother, on the other hand, the most pious lady Theodora, along with her daughter Pulcheria he ordered to take up residence in the previously mentioned Gastria monstery." Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), ch. 11, p. 377.

[145] Treadgold argued that the Karianos palace dates to 839 because it appears to have been built after the completion of the neighboring Triconch in 838, and since it was built exclusively for the princesses indicating that Michael III was not born yet. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , pp. 310, 446, no. 426. For the date of the Triconch, see: I. Bekker, *Symeonis Magistri Annales* (Bonn: 1938), De Theophilo, chapter 21, p. 640. For a brief discussion of Theophilos's Triconch, and the architectural history of the triconch, see Irving Lavin, "The House of the Lord. Aspects of the Role of Palace Triclinia in the Architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," *Art Bulletin* 44 (1962): 1-27, pp. 11-12. I have not found an explicit statement that indicates that the Karianos was built after the completion of the Triconch, suggested by Treadgold. Teophanes Continuatus's statements would support the existence of two structures called Karianos. It is unlikely that he would provide the following two statements about the same building: "a palace for his daughters in the locality called ta Karianou, of which some remains are still extant today, a monument to their memory. . ." see I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), De Theophilo, ch. 8, p. 99, and "Karianos, which is so named because it has in its staircase a broad stream, so to speak, of Carian marble, and is today used as a *vestiarium* for storing away silken vestments, is a work due to his solicitude, as is also the neighboring Triconchos. . .," see ibid, De Theophilo , ch. 42, pp. 139-140, for English translation, see Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 160-161. Janin and Treadgold assumed, that the feast given by Theodora to the victims of iconoclasm took place in the Karianos located in the Great Palace. This conclusion, however, contradicts the reports of the historians, since they mention that the feast took place in the palace that Theophilos built for his daughters. There are two ways to resolve this contradiction, if indeed there were two palaces with the name Karianos at the time of Theophilos: either the tenth century historians got their information confused (which could be explained by the fact that in the tenth century the procession of the Sunday of Orthodoxy started out at the church of the Blachernae, in whose vicinity the Karianos palace of Theophilos's daughters was located, and thus the proximity of this palace and its connection to the daughters might have lead to the erroneous statement) and the feast indeed took place in the Karianos located in the Great Palace, or the tenth century historians were correct, and the feast took place at the Karianos near the Blachernae, where other parts of the ceremony (e.g. the night vigil) also took place.

was perhaps 12, but probably younger (Fig. 39). On the obverse Theodora clad in the *loros* holds a globe with a cross and a scepter. On the reverse, Michael is shown in the *chlamys* holding a similar globe and Thekla in the *loros* grasping a patriarchal cross.[146] Theodora's portrait type draws on the coinage of her predecessor, Irene, but is less abstract. Theodora's likeness and costume is more elaborate; the folds of her garment are clearly delineated, her crown has an intricate design with gems, triangular projections and a cross, Thekla's half-length figure shows the draping of her *loros* and its undergarment clearly. The likenesses remain formulaic, although Theodora's and Thekla's faces now have a wider, heart-shape, the visage of Michael remains oval, following the typical rendering of boy co-emperors on coins. The legend identifies the empress as *ΘЄOδO RaδЄSPVn'A* (*Theodora despyna*), while the children are only given their names without titles (*miXAHLS ΘЄCLA*). Between the eighth and the late eleventh century, primarily regent or sovereign empresses used the title *despyna* officially. It is the female equivalent of *despotes*,[147] which was given to Michael III on the coins of his father, as was customary. In the 1st half of ninth century senior emperors are labeled as *basileus* and a junior colleagues as *despotes* on coins. Theodora's title connected her with her husband's numismatic tradition and helped to define her position vis-à-vis her son.[148]

These coins are frequently over-struck on earlier ones,[149] they are numerous and show great variety in design: in the crown shapes, bust sizes, and placement of the legends. These features have been interpreted as indication of the hasty production of a large issue, which only lasted from 842 to 843.[150] Others, however, argued for a dating

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[146] On some coins Thekla's portrait is half-length where the central band of the *loros* running down her body is visible.

[147] For a brief discussion of the title despotes see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , p. 178 with further bibliography.

[148] Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," , pp. 284-288. Also see James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , p. 125 and Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* , pp. 114-117, although the latter's focus is on a later period. Irene used the title *despoina* and Constantine VI *despotes* in the mosaic inscription of Thessaloniki, Hagia Sophia. Zoe Karbonopsina used despoina on her seals while Constantine VII was designated as *Augustos*.

[149] They are over-struck on coins of Theophilos, Michael II, and Leo V, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 457.

[150] Ibid. , p. 456. Morrisson also accepted this date, see Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale* , p. 517.

between 842-53 primarily on the basis of the large size of the issue.[151] A numismatist recently completed a die study of the issues of Theodora's regency to estimate their size, and concluded that the total number of dies used to strike her 1st issue was 196 indicating that it was substantial in size.[152] He estimated 87 dies for the second issue suggesting it was significantly smaller than the first one.[153] The estimation of the size of the two issues may support the argument that the first should perhaps be dated to a longer period than 842-843. However, it is still not clear, when it was discontinued.

The inclusion of Thekla's image on the first gold issue has been explained variously. It has been argued that the memory of Irene's regency made it desirable to avoid coins that only showed an empress with her son.[154] Others proposed that it perhaps resulted from the political ambition of Thekla, or that it continued the dynastic imagery of iconoclastic emperors. It has also been argued, partly based on coin evidence, that Thekla was perhaps a member of the regency.[155] Beyond the coins, there is only meager evidence for Thekla's association in power, and none come from official documents.[156]

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[151] Evidence also indicates that Thekla was still associated in the imperial power in 845, see Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries" , pp. 39-42, who refers to the *Acts of the Forty Two Martyrs of Amorium*, which mentions Michael, Theodora, and Thekla as co-rulers in 845; the passage states: "basileuontos tes romaion arches Michael kai Theodoras kai Thekles ton christianikotaton kai orthodoxon megalon basileon." See: V. Vasilevskij and P. Nikitin, "Skazanija o 42 amorijskich mucenikach," *Zapiski Imperatorski Akademii Nauk* (1905), VIII, VII/2, p. 52/8-9; also see BHG 1209.

[152] Franz Füeg, "Vom Umgang mit Zufall und Wahrscheinlichkeit in der numismatischen Forschung," *Revue Suisse de Numismatique* (1997): pp. 135-60, especially p. 159. Unfortunately the chart on p. 159 does not indicate how many specimens Füeg studied, but I have been able to study a manuscript of his die study of Theodora's regency coins available at the American Numismatic Society, where he collected 50 coins of the first issue (and found that the number of dies used to strike them exceeds the number of coins in the sample) and 54 coins of the second issue. I thank William Metcalf for making this document available to me.

[153] Füeg collected about 50 specimens from the second issue. Here he found more die duplicates suggesting that fewer dies were used for its production. Füeg estimates 1100 dies for the three gold issues of Theophilos that he minted throughout his 13 year long reign. Thus Theodora's two issues together appear to have been about a quarter of those of her husband.

[154] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 454.

[155] See Christophilopoulou, "He antibasileia eis to Byzantion," , p. 33.

[156] Christophilopoulou presented four examples that suggest Thekla's association in power, see Ibid., pp. 33-34; the Selymbris wall inscription states: "aneneothe ek bethron polis taute epi Michael, Theodoras kai Thekles ous edikaiosen kurios basileuein epi tes ges" in August Boeckh, *Corpus inscriptionum graecarum* (Berlin: 1828-1877), no. 8683, also see Aikaterine Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History, 610-867*, trans. Timothy Cullen, vol. II (Amsterdam: 1993), II, p. 251; in Carolus de Boor, *Nicephori archiepiscopi constantinopolitani Opuscula historica.* (Leipzig: 1880), p. 101/18; and the prologue of the Latin

Mark Herlong suggested that Thekla's image on the coins and her participation in power may have been a precautionary measure; "... had Michael III died young (as his older brother had), she presumably would have married a man who would have become emperor." There is precedence for this: Theophilos' daughter Maria was betrothed to Alexius Musele so that in the absence of a son the succession could be carried through the female line.[157] Thus, Thekla's prominence at the beginning of the regency probably indicates not her political ambition or her membership in the regency council - she was at most 12 years old and probably even younger in 842[158] – but that she was the second most prominent imperial offspring put under the aegis of the regency, as a potential transmitter of imperial lineage and authority. Thus these coins not only aim at announcing the position of Theodora as regent for her under-aged son, but also seek to ensure the continuation of the dynasty through either the male or the female line. Therefore, while the imagery clearly articulates Theodora's importance,[159] she is portrayed as a safeguard of dynastic succession, and her position is presented emphatically as that of a mother, and not of an independent imperial authority.

The second gold issue of the regency reintroduced the image of Christ on Byzantine coins following the iconography of the coins of Justinian II in the early eighth century (Fig. 40).[160] The obverse shows the bust of Christ with the legend: *IhSЧSX RISτOS*, while the reverse represents Theodora and Michael in the *loros and chlamys* but without other insignia or titles *(miXAHLSΘЄ OδORA)*. It has been suggested that Thekla was excluded from these coins because it was difficult to fit three figures on one side.[161]

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translation of the acts of the 869/870 council of Constantinople also indicates that Thekla was co-ruler with her mother and brother, see, Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* , XVI, p. 3.

[157] Mark Walter Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" (Ph. D. dissertation, The Catholic Univeristy of America, 1986), p. 22.

[158] Although a girl was allowed to marry after her twelfth birthday, if she did not marry she was under the legal protection of a *kourator* until the age of 18, at which time she could apply to be freed from this guardianship, see Georgina Buckler, "Women in Byzantine Law about 1100 A.D.," *Byzantion* (1936): pp. 391-416, especially p. 397, no. 7.

[159] The placement of her bust on the obverse, its size, the presence of her title indicated her precedence.

[160] ". . . its rediscovery now was to convey the impression that it had been in use for a long time and was the victim of the iconoclasts. What mattered, after all, was the evidence of the 'true tradition', which one pretended to renew. The Christ coin therefore served both as a piece of historical evidence and as a demonstration of the new official policy on images." Belting, *Likeness and Presence* , p. 164; also see Robin Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London: George Philip, 1985), pp. 141-142.

[161] Morrisson, "Théodora, impératrice, régente et sainte," , p. 164.

This, however, is hardly convincing.[162] There are precedents for it - most recently on a coin of Theophilos. The issue has been dated tentatively to 843, the year of the final defeat of iconoclasm and the restoration of images.[163] Yet others argued that due to the small size of the issue it should be dated to 853-6, and they linked it with an important victory for Theodora in 853, the sack of the Arabic port Damietta.[164] While I do not believe that the sack of Damietta motivated this issue, it is possible, that it was not introduced in 843 but somewhat later. The small size of the issue compared to the size of the first issue would certainly argue for a date later than 843.[165]

The imperial effigy of the second issue differs stylistically from the portraits of the first issue: the figures lack modeling, the faces are elongated, flat, and stripped down to a basic formula. Theodora's regalia is simplified, and closely follows the rendering of the crown of Irene on the coins of her sole reign. The abstract forms of the imperial portraits also contrasts with the more tangible, three-dimensional image of Christ. The different stylistic modes of the imperial likenesses and the effigy of Christ underscore the distinct realms of their existence (the celestial vs. the terrestrial), and the hierarchy between these domains. The iconographic and stylistic disparity of the two issues also highlights the fundamental difference in their message. The first articulates a clear dynastic agenda and legitimizes the rule of Theodora and her children through a splendid image of the imperial family and its authority. The visual prominence of the imperial robes and insignia helps to broadcast this. The second issue has a more complex message: it proclaims a change in religious policy through the restoration of the tradition

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[162] Penna is of a similar opinion, see Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries" , p. 42.

[163] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 455. Penna argued: "it seems more likely that a coin connected with the restoration of the icons would depict all the nominal co-rulers." See Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries" , p. 42. In other words, she would expect Thekla to be included on the coins if the issue was indeed related to the restoration of images. Thekla, however, did not sign the documents in 843, she is not mentioned in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*, neither is she mentioned in any other source relating to the restoration of images, nor has she become part of the later iconography of the Feast of Orthodoxy.

[164] For the sack of the Arab port city in Egypt in 853, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers Universty Press, 1957), p. 222, no. 2.

[165] Mango suggested a date c. 850 based on the representation of Michael as a "beardless adolescent," see Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen: 1959), p. 130.

of the orthodox church and articulates visually the source of Theodora's and Michael's imperial power: they are emperors by the grace of god, as has been inscribed on silver coins and Thekla is absent because she was not considered the elect of god.[166]

Theodora's earliest lead seal dates to the reign of her husband, for its obverse carries a bust image of Theophilos with the legend *ΘЄOFI LOSbASILЄ*, while the reverse displays the inscription: *ΘЄOTOKЄBOHΘ'ΘЄOΔωPACAVTŏCTHC* (Fig. 41).[167] Theodora is not depicted on the seal - it is the image of her husband that provides the authority.[168] Two types of lead seals survive from Theodora's regency. The first type is aniconic, and follows the design of the *milaresia* issued in the name of Michael, Theodora and Thekla with one alteration: the obverse represents a cross potent on steps surrounded by the inscription ЄnOnOMAτ'τЧPAτ'S[και του Υιου και του Αγιου Πνευματος],[169] while the reverse shows the inscription *+MIXA HLSΘЄOδO RASΘЄCLA ЄCΘЄЧbAS ILISROM* (Fig. 42). This type has been tentatively dated to 842-843 because of its lack of imagery.[170] This, however, hardly seems a convincing argument, particularly since the second type of seals of Theodora's regency probably date to the last years of the regency. The second type of Theodora's lead seals diverge from the numismatic iconography of the regency; they represent the bust of the bearded Michael holding a *labarum* in his right hand on the obverse with the inscription *....HL baSRO.. (Michael basileus romaion),* and show Theodora's bust holding a *globus cruciger* in her right hand and a cruciform scepter in her left on the reverse with the legend *[Θ]ЄoδO RaδЄ.... (Theodra despoina)* (Fig. 43). Michael is clad in the *chlamys* while Theodora dons the *loros*. It is interesting to note that Theodora's representation on these seals is closer in style to representations of Irene on her gold coins and seals than to her own representations on the coins. Zacos and Veglery provided a tentative date of 843-856 for

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[166] I thank Anna Kartsonis for discussing this issue.

[167] Athens, Benaki Museum MM 13836, see Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 57, no. 48A..

[168] There also survives a seal of Theodora's mother, Theoktiste which shows a cruciform invocation to the Virgin on the obverse surrounded by the beginning of the legend that continues on the reverse: *...KTICTHCZOCTHCΠATPI.... +KAIMHTHPTHCBACIΛЄICHC.* This seal lacks imagery. See Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , II, no. 1083 and Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , pp. 56-57, no. 48; see "Seals of Female Imperial Family Members" below.

[169] The *milaresia* display the legend: *Ihsus Xristus nika.*

[170] See Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 48, no. 54.

these seals, however, also noted that because Michael is depicted with a beard, the seals were likely produced not much earlier than 856, when Theodora resigned.[171] This conclusion may be supported by the fact that Michael is represented holding the *labarum*, a motif also used on the coins of his sole reign, while on the coins of the regency he does not appear with the *labarum*, he holds either the *globus cruciger* or appears without insignia. Michael's father, Theophilos reintroduced the *labarum* into numismatic iconography and Michael's employment of the motif clearly associates him with his father and renders him as a mature ruler.[172] Although the image of Christ was introduced into the coinage of the regency, there survive no seals issued jointly by Michael and Theodora with the likeness of Christ. The first middle Byzantine imperial seal with the effigy of Christ was introduced by Michael III during his sole reign. It depicts Michael on the reverse and Christ on the obverse. The legends state: *IhSЧSX RISτOS* and *MIX AHL IMPЄ'RbASIL'*.[173] While the lack of seals with the image of Christ may be due to accidents of survival, given that several seals of Michael and Theodora survive, it is possible that such seals were not produced. What does this divergence in numismatic and sphragistic iconography indicate?[174] The production of coins and seals was a related enterprise in Byzantium as mentioned above, and it appears that in most situations seals were influenced by the iconography of coins. While on the one hand seals are personal objects with a far more limited circulation than coins, and their owners exercised personal choice in selecting or accepting their iconography, they were also a conservative medium that followed the established spraghistic and numismatic traditions in order to preserve the recognizability and official character of their imagery. Although bureaucrats and church officials used the image of Christ on seals starting in the sixth century, no images of Christ were used on seals from the second part of the seventh through the mid-ninth century, and emperors never used the effigy of Christ on their seals until Michael III adopted it. If imperial seals prior to the mid-ninth century were decorated with a holy

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[171] Ibid. , p. 49, no. 55.
[172] For a discussion of the *labarum*, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 134-138.
[173] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , I/1 p. 50, no. 56.
[174] I thank Anna Kartsonis for discussing this point with me.

image, it was invariably a representation of the Virgin.[175] Since there was no precedent to place the image of Christ on imperial seals the force of tradition may have kept Theodora from introducing this innovation, just like she kept the imperial effigies on her seals close in style and appearance to those of her predecessor, Irene.

There is a gold pendant in the Gutman Collection that was exhibited at the Allen Memorial Museum in 1961 that depicts a bust of Christ on one side and the busts of a young emperor and an adult empress on the other (Fig. 44). The medallion "was made of three sheets of gold. Two, the front and back pieces, which have figures and borders cut out in the gold, were then applied over either side of the third plaque, the cut out areas filled with bits of glass, or enamel, and the three plaques fastened together by a flat band around them. With the rosette at the top is a loop for attaching the pendant to the necklace."[176] Marvin Ross identified the imperial figures as Irene and Constantine.[177] While it is clear that the design of the medallion was based on numismatic types, the imperial image bears a greater resemblance to coin types of Michael III and Theodora after 842 than to those of the joint coinage of Constantine VI and Irene. Both the emperor and the empress hold crosses in their right hands, and the boy is dressed in a *chlamys* and the empress in a *loros*. This design is virtually identical with the reverse type of the first issue of Theodora's reign that shows Michael and Thekla, although Michael holds a *globus cruciger* rather than a cross. It is however possible that on the coin that served as a prototype for the pendant the globe was off the flan. The presence of the bust of Christ also suggests that the medallion could not be associated with Irene, for it was during the reign of Theodora that the image of Christ was reintroduced into numismatic iconography and during the reign of Michael III that it appeared on imperial seals.[178] The pendant therefore should no longer be considered an image of Irene and Constantine and should be connected with Theodora's iconography. Yet the presence of

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[175] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 141-143.

[176] Marvin C Ross, "A Consular Medallion of Constantine VI and Irene," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 20 (1962): pp. 27-32, especially p. 27. Also see C. Parkhurst, "Melvin Gutman Collection of Ancient and Medieval Gold," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* XVIII (1961): p. 241.

[177] Ross, "A Consular Medallion of Constantine VI and Irene."

[178] For coins of Michael III, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 452-470, pl. XXVIII.

the *IC XC* sigla flanking the two sides of Christ's shoulder and the circular nimbus around his head indicate further problems. The bust of Christ was not accompanied by the sigla *IC XC* on Byzantine coins and seals until the reign of John Tzimiskes (969-976), and the circular halo was not employed for bust images of Christ on coins and imperial seals until the reign of Constantine VII (913-959).[179] Moreover, the technique of the pendant is also unusual and particularly crude when compared to metal-works of the middle Byzantine period. The uncommon technique of the piece and the problems with its iconography both suggest that it is likely to be a fake.[180]

Eudokia Ingerina on Coins

Michael III did not mint coins with the effigy of his wife, but the consort of the next emperor, Eudokia Ingerina was shown on two issues of Basil I: on his *solidi* and *tremissis*.[181] The two gold issues shared the same iconography: a bust image of Basil I appeared on the obverse holding a *globus cruciger* in his right hand and wearing the *loros* and a crown with a central cross, while the busts of his wife, Eudokia and his oldest son and first designated heir, Constantine were shown on the reverse (Fig. 45). Eudokia is also dressed in the *loros* and wears a crown with a central cross, two triangular projections, and double pendilia and holds a scepter in her left hand. Constantine appears on her right clad in the *chlamys* and crown and holding a *globus cruciger* in his right hand. The busts of Eudokia and Constantine are similar in figure style to representations of Irene and Constantine VI on Irene's regency coins, and to the effigies of Michael III and Theodora on the second gold issue of Theodora's regency, and they share the same formulaic rendering of facial features. The legends differ somewhat on Eudokia's two denominations. The obverse of the *solidus* states: *+bASILIOS AЧϛЧSτ'b'*, and the reverse

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[179] See Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 151-153. He refers to two non-imperial seals of the ninth century that included the sigla as exceptions.

[180] I thank David Buckton and John Nesbitt for discussing this piece with me. They both expressed doubt about the authenticity of this work in personal conversations. David Buckton suggested that he knew only one other piece, made of silver at the Ashmolean Museum that was of similar technique. I have not been able to examine either of these pieces in person.

[181] See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 489-490. Eudokia Ingerina was not included on the seals of Basil I that come down to us and none of her own seals are extant.

shows: *ConSTAnT' SЄVδOCIA*. The *tremissis*, on the other hand gives a different title to the emperor on the obverse: *+bASILIOS bASILЄЧS*, while the reverse legend is virtually identical to that on the *solidus*: *+ConSTAnTIn' CЄЄVδOCIA*.[182] Grierson pointed out, that the *solidus* issue of Basil with the image of Eudokia and Constantine is rare and most of its specimens are in good condition, which indicate that they belonged to a commemorative issue. He proposed two possible occasions for its production: the coronation of Constantine in 867/8 or the commemoration of the death of Eudokia in 882, but favored the latter date.[183] It is, however, questionable why would Basil strike coins after the death of his wife and why would these include the image of his son who died several years earlier. While there has been a tradition to include deceased family members on the coins during the Isaurian dynasty, this iconography did not continue into the ninth century. Moreover, Isaurian dynastic coins only included deceased male emperors, never wives or sons. There is, however, the ceremonial issue of Theophilos depicting his family, which could have provided precedent for Basil to issue a coin with his wife and intended heir. Thus it seems more likely that the coins were struck in 867/8 to commemorate Constantine's elevation to the throne, and they probably were scattered during the festivities to members of the court and the people of Constantinople.[184]

There has been some controversy regarding the parentage of Constantine. Although contemporary sources recorded that Constantine was Eudokia's son, because some texts also indicate that Basil was married to a woman named Maria before his espousal of Eudokia, it has been suggested that Constantine must be Maria's son.[185] This view however, has been successfully rebutted by Grierson and more recently Tougher.[186]

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[182] Ibid., III/2, pp. 489-490.
[183] Ibid., III/2, pp. 481.
[184] Morrisson and Penna also argued that it was more likely a coronation issue, see Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, pp. 538, 542; Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries", pp. 48-49.
[185] See for example, N. Adontz, "La portée historique de l'orasion funèbre de Basil I par son fils Leo VI le sage," *Byzantion* 8 (1933): pp. 501-13.
[186] Grierson emphasized that contemporary sources should be given weight for they quite likely recorded the parentage of Constantine correctly, and he also suggested that it would be unlikely to place Eudokia and Constantine on the coins together had he not been her son, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, p. 474. Tougher also argued in favor of Eudokia's parentage of Constantine, pointing out that the date usually assigned to the marriage of Basil and Eudokia may have taken place somewhat earlier than assumed, and that Constantine could have participated in a campaign with his father when he was 13 or 14 years old in 878, an event that many earlier

Basil's choice to include not only his son and heir, but also his wife on his coins is significant. On the one hand, associating his wife with himself on the coins of the empire endowed Eudokia with legitimacy and power, while at the same time it served to present a strong imperial family with a secure future provided by Eudokia's fertile maternal body. The iconography also underscores Basil's different policy from that of his predecessor, who made no obvious attempts to secure the future of the Amorian dynasty and sired no offspring who could have become his heir. Basil, on the other hand indicated his intention to establish a new dynasty and to groom his successor from among his offspring from the beginning of his reign. The emphasis on the fertility of his marriage underscored the legitimacy of his power, and drew attention to the obvious fact, that his predecessor was unable to produce a child. Articulating the strength of the imperial stock and the health of the dynasty was important at the beginning of Basil's reign, for he acceded to power by assassinating his predecessor who previously elevated him as co-emperor.[187]

Coins and Seals of Zoe Carbonopsina

Basil's second son, and ultimate heir to the throne, Leo VI did not issue coins with likenesses of any of his four wives.[188] After Leo's death, his brother Alexander assumed imperial power, however, he died after only thirteen months in office.[189] Following his demise, Leo's fourth wife, Zoe Carbonopsina acted as regent for her only son and Leo's designated heir, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos from February 914

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scholars did not believe to have taken place, see Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 43-44.

[187] For the circumstance of Basil's rise to power, see for example Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* , p. 232.

[188] Leo in fact did not appear to have issued gold coins at all in the first 22 years of his reign, save for an extremely rare issue (Class I) that is difficult to date. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , pp. 508-510. For a recent discussion of the reign of Leo VI, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , who dedicates a chapter to the historical problems surrounding Leo's marriages and wives, see pp. 133-163. Also see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 109-125.

[189] Alexander ruled from May 11, 912 to June 6, 913.

when the boy was about 9 years old to March 919 when he turned fourteen.[190] In this period Zoe appeared on gold and copper coins,[191] as well as on seals and on an unique silver 'coin.'[192] These are the only extant representations of Zoe from her lifetime.[193] The *solidus* of Constantine and Zoe combines the image of the enthroned Christ on the obverse with portraits of the imperial figures jointly holding a patriarchal cross on the reverse (Fig. 46).[194] The figure of Christ seated on the lyre-back throne and the surrounding legend, *+IhSXPSRЄX RЄϛNANTIЧM** are derived from the numismatic type introduced by Basil I, just as the motif of the half-length imperial figures holding the cross between them are derived from a type of Basil I that depicts the emperor with his first son, Constantine. Zoe, following the tradition established by Irene, is dressed in the *loros*, while Constantine VII is shown in the *chlamys*. Zoe's *loros* introduces a new, more elaborate rendering of this robe with a circular, jewel encrusted collar, whereas the *chlamys* of Constantine is rendered similarly to its depiction on the coins of Basil I. The faces of the two figures are distinguished by different shapes: Constantine's face is triangular and rather flat, while Zoe's visage appears more plump, has an oval shape, her cheeks modeled more carefully. The hair shown on the forehead below the crown is also rendered differently than on earlier coins, where it was invariably shown by a straight line; Constantine's hair is indicated by a curved line and Zoe's by two slightly curved

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[190] For a discussion of the role and position of Zoe, see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 114-125 and Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 152-163, with bibliography of earlier literature. Zoe achieved the position of regent only two years after Leo's death, for Leo's rule was followed by that of his brother, Alexander, who died after 13 months leaving a regency council of nine members that excluded Zoe.

[191] D. M. Metcalf, "The Copper Coinage of Constantine VII with Zoe in the Balkans," *Buletinul Societatii Numismatice Române* LXXV-LXXVI (1981-82): pp. 253-55; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , pp. 541-542, 559-560.

[192] For a discussion of Zoe's gold coinage, see Hugh Goodacre, "The Story of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus from His Solidi," *The Numsmatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* 15, Series 5 (1935): pp. 115-19, pl. VIII; Bellinger, "Byzantine Notes," ; Timothy E. Gregory, "The Gold Coinage of the Emperor Constantine VII," *ANSMN* 19 (1974): pp. 87-118, pls. XIX-XX.

[193] It has been argued that Zoe may be represented on the ivory casket now in the collection of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, see Anthony Cutler and Nincolas Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," *AB* LXX (1988): pp. 77-87. However, this identification is by no means certain, see Henry Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," *AB* LXX (1988): pp. 88-103 for a different view. Zoe is shown in one scene in the 12th century Madrid Skylitzes, at the deathbed of Leo VI on f.116v, see André Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid, Biblitothéque de l'Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines de Venise, n. 10* (Venice: 1979), no. 272, fig. 143, pl. XXV.

[194] The size of this issue was described by Gregory as "moderate," see Gregory, "The Gold Coinage of the Emperor Constantine VII," p. 95.

lines meeting right below the central jewel of her crown. Zoe's figure is placed on the left of the cross, in the less prestigious position, however, her crown with a wide band, two semicircular projections, a central jewel supporting a cross, and double pendilia is far more elaborate than that of her son. Zoe's hand is also placed above Constantine's hand on the shaft of the cross, indicating her precedence. The legend states: *ConSτAπτ'CЄZωHЄnXωb'R'*.[195] The overall composition and the depiction of the figures as half-length rather than as busts also show similarities with the representation of Michael III and Thekla on the regency coins of Theodora, where Thekla holds a patriarchal cross in the center of the composition while Michael is endowed with a *globus cruciger*. Zoe returned to the iconography of the enthroned Christ employed by Basil I rather than using its more aesthetically successful variant introduced during the reign of her husband, Leo VI. Following Bellinger's conclusions, Grierson argued that this numismatic type was a replica of the mosaic set up in the Chrysotriclinos above the throne of the emperor at the end of the reign of Michael III, and thus was one of the first monumental images to be restored after the defeat of iconoclasm, and was also the image par excellence associated with the imperial office for it decorated the throne room.[196] Therefore the reintroduction of his type to the gold coins of Zoe's regency connected Zoe and Constantine VII with Constantine's grandfather, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, and also underscored their assumption of the imperial office under the protection of the icon of Christ which has been closely linked with the exercise of imperial power. This image, also evoked a specific place in the imperial palace, the throne room, and on Zoe's coins no doubt also emphasized her return to the palace after her banishment following the death of Alexander.[197]

Only one unique specimen of a silver coin of Constantine VII and Zoe survives but it differs in weight, design, and fabric from *milaresia* struck in the tenth century.[198]

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[195] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, p. 542.

[196] See Ibid., III/2, p. 154-158. In Grierson's view the image of the enthroned Christ on the coins of Leo VI reproduces a different icon.

[197] For the turmoil following Alexander's death, see Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, pp. 473-476.

[198] A. Veglery and G. Zacos, "A Unique Silver Coin of Constantine VII," *Numismatic Circular* LIXV (1956): pp. 379-80.

The coin is unique in its iconography – the obverse represents a bust of the Virgin holding the medallion of the Christ child with the legend *+VΠЄPAΓIAΘЄOTOKЄR'*, and the reverse shows the bust figures of Constantine and Zoe holding a patriarchal cross surmounting a globe with the inscription *CONStAnTCЄZωHb'ROm'* (Fig. 47).[199] Constantine is clad in the *chlamys* and wears a crown with a central cross, Zoe is draped in the *loros*, and her crown sports two triangular projections, a central cross, and pendilia. The effigies of the imperial figures are closely reminiscent of the image of Eudokia Ingerina and Constantine on the gold coins of Basil I. Because the coin has a high silver content, its publishers Veglery and Zacos argued that it migth be the only surviving specimen of a monetary reform of the silver coinage during Zoe's regency. Grierson, on the other hand, proposed that this unique specimen was a pattern for the *solidus* – one that did not receive approval and was therefore not minted.[200] Penna also suggested that this coin probably served as a pattern, and proposed that it may have been intended as the first issue of the regency before Zoe was first removed from power.[201] Two lead tokens of approximately the same size reproduce exactly the imagery and legends of the unique silver coin, and Veglery and Zacos suggested that the lead pieces served as tokens for public distribution of alms (Fig. 48).[202]

Although the image of the Virgin was popular on seals, including imperial ones, of the early Byzantine period,[203] the effigy of the Mother of God was first introduced into the coinage of Leo VI. Class I of Leo's *solidi*, a rare ceremonial issue usually dated to the end of the reign, represents an orans bust of the Virgin on the obverse and a bust of

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[199] Veglery and Zacos emphasized that this legend does not appear on other coins, although it is found in hymns to the Virgin, see ibid.. This iconographic type of the Virgin is known from as early as the seventh century and it was given the assignation Nikopoios in the eleventh century, see ODB, III, p. 2176. Also see Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 81-86.

[200] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 533, 541

[201] Penna, "Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Centuries" , p. 54.

[202] See A. Veglery and G. Zacos, "More About the Silver Coin of Constantine VII," *Numismatic Circular* LXV (1957): pp. 195-96; Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , pp. 56-57, no. 64; Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , p.64, no. 57.

[203] For a discussion of the representation of the Virgin on seals, see Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 48-140.

the emperor holding a *globus cruciger* on the reverse.[204] Penna speculated that this coin was issued at the time of Leo's fourth, illegal marriage to Zoe Carbonopsina in order to provide legitimacy for the union and its offspring, a hypothesis that she supported with the argument that the unique silver coin of Zoe probably also served as an attempt to seek the favor of the Mother of God in ensuring the legitimate authority of Zoe and her son Constantine VII at the helm of the empire.[205] While it is likely that Zoe's silver coin would draw on the gold issue of Leo VI, is it possible to maintain that both gold issues of Leo would have been struck in connection with his fourth marriage?[206] Grierson argued, primarily on the basis of the portrait of Constantine VII on Class I of the *solidi*, that it had to be a late issue (906-908) because the emperor is represented as a mature man with long beard and long, flowing hair, and that it was unlikely that such an image would be created for him early in his reign, for he was only 20 years old when he took office. This argument, however, falls apart when one compares the representations of Leo VI on his two gold issues, and when one compares Leo's coins to those of his followers. On Leo's second issue, which is dated to 908-912, he appears with a short beard and curly locks which give the overall impression of a younger man than the portrait of the first issue, despite that fact that the second issue is assigned a later date. Moreover, Grierson stated that on the second issue, Constantine VII "is shown much older than he really was,"[207] thus it is conceivable that his father was also shown with a more mature image than his actual age may have warranted, therefore it is not necessary to date the first issue to the end of the reign. Romanos Diogenes, Constantine VII, and Romanos II, on some of their issues all appear with a portrait that represents them with a long, flowing beard strikingly similar to the image of Leo on his first gold issue. However, on other issues they are shown with shorter beards – thus the long bearded and long-haired imperial image

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[204] These *solidi* are rare. For a discussion of the coin and the problems of dating Leo's *solidi*, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, pp. 508-510, 512; Maria Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God* (Athens: 2000), p. 365, no. 44.

[205] Vasso Penna, "The Mother of God on Coins and Lead Seals," in *The Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens: 2000), 209-17, p. 210.

[206] Leo only had two gold issues, Class I shows him with the Virgin, while Class II represents the enthroned Christ on the obverse and the standing figures of Leo with his son Constantine VII on the reverse, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, pp. 512-514.

[207] Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 179

introduced by Leo VI does not necessarily reflect the emperor's actual appearance or specific age, but a new type of public image (Fig. 49). One could argue, that when Leo rose to power at the age of 20, he may have found it useful to cultivate a mature image on his coins. It is also not necessary to connect Leo's first gold issue with his fourth marriage, for his strong devotion to the Virgin is well documented, as for example the Berlin ivory which represents the emperor crowned by the Virgin in the presence of Gabriel, Christ, Peter, Paul, Cosmas and Damian demonstrates (Fig. 5).[208] Even if Leo's first gold issue was not minted in connection with his fourth marriage, Zoe Carbonopsina may have drawn inspiration from his coins to fashion her own issue representing the Virgin. Zoe's own devotion to the Virgin is also recorded in a tenth century text that describes a series of miracles that took place at the church of the Virgin at the Pege. According to this narrative, Zoe had fashioned a girdle that was of the same size as that depicted on an icon of the Virgin at the Pege and wore this in order to ensure a successful pregnancy.[209] Unfortunately no information is available about the appearance of this icon, and since the church burned down in 924, the icon probably vanished along with the rest of the decoration during the fire. It is possible that the reconstruction carried out immediately after the fire restored most or part of the original decoration of the church, for the miracles continued.[210] It is possible that the image of the Virgin on the silver coin and lead tokens is a replica of the miracle working icon of the Virgin from the Pege, and aims to seek the help of the mother of god in securing the rule of Constantine and Zoe as it has already done when she had assisted Zoe to conceive Constantine. However, since the appearance of this icon is unknown, this suggestion remains a hypothesis. Information is only available about the appearance of the icon of the Zoodochos Pege

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[208] For a discussion of this piece, see Corrigan, "The Ivory Scepter of Leo VI: A Statement of Post-Iconoclastic Imperial Ideology," ; Arwed Arnulf, "Eine Perle für das Haupt Leons VI. Epigraphische und Ikonographische Untersuchungen zum sogennanten Szepter Leons VI," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 32 (1990): pp. 69-84; Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 201-202, no. 138.

[209] Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , p. 154, n. 113. For the text, see "De sascris aedibus deque miraculis Deiparae ad Fontem," in *Acta Sanctorum Novembris III* (1910), pp. 878-89, ch. 26, especially p. 885. Also see, Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Byzantine Collections of Miracles," *Symbolae Osloenses* 74 (1999): pp. 195-211, especially p. 205, no. 17.

[210] See S. Bénay, "Le Monastère de la Source a Constantinople," *Echos d'Orient* 3 (1900): pp. 223-28, 95-300. Also see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie*, vol. III (Paris: 1953), pp. 232-237.

from the forteenth century, when it depicted the bust of the orans Virgin with the Christ child in front of her chest placed above a basin with flowing streams of water. It has been suggested that this image was fashioned after the representation of the Virgin in the imperial baths of the Blachernai, however, it has also been argued that the image at the Blachernai showed an orans Virgin without the Christ child.[211] While there are similarities between the imagery, there is also a significant difference: on the coin of Zoe the Virgin does not assume an orant position but holds the medallion of the Christ child. I will return to a discussion of the importance and iconography of the Virgin on coins and seals of empresses below.

The stylistic similarity of the imperial effigies of Zoe and Constantine VII to the earlier numismatic representations of Eudokia Ingerina and Constantine may suggest that the silver coin was produced at the beginning of the regency, perhaps for some kind of a ceremonial occasion, or as Grierson suggested as a pattern for the *solidus*. Its iconography may have been abandoned for two reasons. On the one hand the image of the Virgin and child may have evoked associations about the circumstances of Constantine's birth by reproducing the icon whose help was instrumental in his conception, an issue better shrouded in oblivion given the controversy Constantine's birth and Leo's fourth marriage spurred; it is also possible that Zoe recognized that the image of the enthroned Christ would be a more effective visual device for her coins given her difficulty of retaining her position in the palace after the death of Alexander and the need to legitimize her regency after her return to power. On the other hand Zoe may have wanted an imperial image on her coins that creates an obvious connection with representations of Theodora, a regent mother ruling in the name of her young son, rather than an image that closely resembled her pre-deceased mother in-law, Eudokia Ingerina, who did not rule in her own right. While an image closely resembling that of Eudokia may have been proposed for Zoe, as attested by the silver coin, it appears that Zoe sought a new image that on the one hand connected her with a renowned regent of the previous century, as well as with her eminent father-in-law, the founder of the dynasty whose blood line she sought to protect. The imperial image also drew great attention to the

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[211] ODB, III, p. 1616.

insignia of the empress, thereby underscoring her position. A similar emphasis on imperial robes and insignia is found on the coins of her predecessor Theodora.

The obverses of the copper coins (Class I of the *folles*) of Zoe's regency show similar but not identical imperial effigies to those on the *solidus*, while the reverses display an inscription (Fig. 50).[212] Now Constantine appears in the *loros*, and his hand is placed in the higher position along the shaft of the cross, while his mother is shown in the *chlamys*, an unusual feature for the numismatic iconography of middle Byzantine empresses, and her crown is less ostentatious, a double band with two small rectangular projections, a cross, and triple pendilia. The obverse legend states: *+ConSτAnτ'CЄZoHb'*, while the reverse reads: *+Cons τAnτInO CЄZOHbA' SILISRO mЄOn*. The differences in the iconography and legends of the two denominations may be the results of the different intended audiences to whom the coins were addressed.[213] Clearly, the copper coins emphasized the primary position of Constantine VII in every aspect, but reiterated the notion of his joint rule with his mother, while the gold coins put the emphasis on the authority of Zoe as vehemently as possible without ousting Constantine from his place of precedent.

The imperial lead seals issued by Zoe and Constantine VII show a bust of Christ with the legend *+IhSЧS ...τOS* on the obverse, while the reverse employs an imperial effigy that closely follows representations of the same figures on gold and copper coins, but with a few subtle modifications: now both Constantine and Zoe are shown in the *loros*, Zoe's crown is comprised of a wide band with a rectangular central jewel carrying a three-fold ornament and double pendilia, and Zoe appears to be grasping the shaft of the cross in the higher position than on the gold coins. The legend states: *+ConSτAnτ'SZωHbASIL'R'* (Fig. 51).[214] The issuing authority of the second type of seal that survives from Zoe's regency is uncertain. This lead seal shows a bust of the loros-clad Constantine VII wearing a crown with a central trefoil ornament with the legend *+KωNSTAN TINOCAVT'* on the obverse, while the reverse displays a bust of Zoe

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[212] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, pp. 559-560.

[213] For a connection between the unusual frequency of these copper coins on the Balkans and Zoe's military policies, see Metcalf, "The Copper Coinage of Constantine VII with Zoe in the Balkans."

[214] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I/1, pp. 54-55, no. 62.

wearing the *loros* and a crown with a cross and two triangular projections and double pendilia with the following inscription, *ZωHΛЄCΠVNH* accompanied by the indiction sign *INΔ' S*, which provides the date 918/9 for the issuing of the seal (Fig. 52). There is a difficulty in determining the function of this seal, because imperial seals do not typically include indiction signs. It is, however, also unlikely that it would have been the seal of an imperial official, such as a kommerkiarios, for the legend of the seal does not refer to anyone other than the imperial figures depicted on them, a serious shortcoming for a seal used in a specific office of the bureaucracy.[215]

Seals of Anastasia-Theophano

No coins were minted for empresses following Zoe Carbonopsina in the tenth century, not even for Anastasia-Theophano, the widow of Romanos II who acted as regent for her sons Basil II and Constantine VIII from March to August 963.[216] Yet several of her seals survive, which represent the bust of the orans Virgin on their obverse, and show the bust of the empress holding a globe with a trefoil ornament in her right and a scepter in her left hand on the reverse (Fig. 53).[217] The Virgin's bust is surrounded by the legend +ΘЄO TOK.[218] The empress wears a crown with a wide band surmounted by four triangular projections and a central cross and decorated with pendilia, and she is dress in the *loros*. The *loros* is comprised of a jeweled collar introduced by Zoe Carbonopsina; however a further modification to the design also indicates that the empress wears the modified loros – it is no longer draped across the chest crosswise but

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[215] Ibid. , I/1, pp. 55-56, no. 63 and Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 65, no. 58.

[216] For a recent discussion of Theophano, see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 126-135. One copper coin of Theophano was reported to have been found, however, Grierson argued persuasively that it was a forgery, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , p. 579; also see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 65.

[217] For a discussion of the orans Virgin on lead seals, see Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 86-89.

[218] The abbreviation *MP ΘV* is not inscribed on the seal.

falls straight down the chest.[219] Unfortunately the faces are too worn on the surviving specimens to give an accurate impression of their original appearance, yet they appear to have been carefully modeled youthful visages. The circular legend reads: *+ΘЄOFA nOVAЧГδST.* Veglery and Zacos suggested that this seal was most likely produced during Theophano's regency in 963, yet they dated it more broadly to 959-969, to the reigns of her two husbands.[220] Cotsonis pointed out that the iconographic type of the orans Virgin is infrequent on seals before the tenth century most likely because it was not employed on imperial seals in the same period. He emphasized that, although the Virgin orans was introduced into numismatic iconography by Leo VI and was employed on coins by several rulers up to the end of the eleventh century, it never appeared on seals of emperors in the same period. Two empresses, however, Anastasia-Theophano and Eudokia Makrembolitissa used this iconography, which has been associated with the Blachernai shrine, where a carved image of the orans Virgin sprouting holy water from her palms is attested to have stood in the imperial baths.[221] The iconography of the seal is unusual both as a seal of an imperial consort and as that of a regent mother. The only other seal of an imperial consort that survives from the middle Byzantine period prior to that of Theopano belongs to Theodora the iconophile, which however, did not represent the empress, but carried the likeness of her husband. There is more ample evidence for seals of regents, they, however, invariably appear on the seals together with their children, never by themselves, as was the case with Irene, Theodora, and Zoe Carbonopsina. It is possible that Theophano's seals were not produced during the regency, but during the lifetime of her first or second husband, and given the fact that Theophano transmitted the imperial authority to her second husband by virtue of her status as imperial widow, a seal like this appears more likely to have been produced during the reign of Nikephoros Phokas. It is also not out of the question, that the seal would have been issued during the reign of Theophano's son, Basil II, who never

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[219] The modified *loros* was first introduced into numismatic iconography on the coins of Constantine VII. See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , pp. 120-125, and Table 12.

[220] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 72, p. 65.

[221] See Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 87-89. For a relief of the Virgin orans with perforated palms, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 450, no. 291.

married. We have information that indicates that after her banishment from the palace during the reign of John Tzimiskes (969-976) Theophano was recalled and lived at court for a long time.[222] Garland suggested that Theophano was the senior Augusta of Basil's court[223] and Theophano's impact on the arts of the court of Basil II is also discernible in the decoration of the Menologion of Basil II, which includes a representation of Saint Theophano, perhaps as a tribute to Basil's mother.[224] The imperial iconography of Theophano's seals follows those of Irene and Theodora, however, the style of the imperial effigy is less abstract and places a greater emphasis on the regalia, similarly to representations of Zoe Carbonopsina.

Coins and Seals of the Purple-born Zoe and Theodora

Since Basil II (976-1025) never married, and his younger brother Constantine VIII (1025-1028) did not have sons, Constantine's daughters, the purple-born princesses, Zoe and Theodora became important agents in transmitting and exercising imperial power as the last living members of the exhausted Macedonian line. Zoe had translated the empire to four emperors, to three by marriage (Romanos III, Michael IV, and Constantine IX) and to one by adoption (Constantine V), and Zoe and Theodora even reigned by themselves as joint rulers for a few months in 1042. Despite the importance of Zoe as a transmitter of power, her numismatic representations were not widely disseminated, and only two specimens of her seals survived.[225] In fact Zoe is not represented in the coinages of either of her husbands, and no coins survive from the short reign of her adopted son. Two rare copper coins of Zoe are extant, and one rare *solidus*, which represents her together with her sister Theodora.

The first copper coin known from two specimens shows the bust of the empress in the *loros* and a crown decorated with three triangular projections terminating in trefoils,

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[222] George the Monk says that she lived for 50 years after the death of her first husband in 963.
[223] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , p. 135, however, she provided no evidence to support this claim.
[224] For a discussion of the Menologion of Basil II, see Chapter VII below.
[225] One of her seals has been misidentified as a copper coin, however, it is more likely that it was a lead seal, see below.

which alternate with pinnacles and with double pendilia (Fig. 54).[226] The modified *loros* has a jeweled collar with two rows of jewels across the shoulders and a tall beaded collar covering her neck. The face of the empress is elongated and youthful, with a narrow, almost pointy chin and wide, round cheeks. The empress holds a scepter in her right hand and a globe in her left, both surmounted by trefoils. The legend reads: *+ZωHA VT OVCTH.* The obverse shows a standing half-length figure of Christ blessing with his right hand and holding a book in his left. The legend identifies the image as *OANTI ΦωNHT, IC XC.* Grierson suggested that this coin functioned as a pattern for the gold *histamenon* that would have been issued in 1041-1042.[227] The choice of Christ Antiphonites to accompany Zoe on this coin reveals a personal devotional preference of the empress who, according to Psellos, commissioned a copy of the famous icon of Christ Antiphonites preserved at the church of the Chalkoprateia and kept it in her residence, and also founded a church dedicated to him where she was buried.[228] The icon was known to perform miracles and worked as an oracle for Zoe.[229]

A second, unique copper coin has been attributed to Zoe based on the iconography and style of its imperial effigies, however, due to the difficulty of reading its inscription, this identification remains tentative. Grierson suggested that this coin served as a pattern for a gold issue, in this case for the *tetarteron*, and dated it to 1041-1042. The obverse represents the bust of an empress in the *loros* and crown with pinnacles and pendilia, holding a *globus cruciger* with a patriarchal cross in her right hand and a scepter with beaded decoration in her left (Fig. 55). The reverse shows a mature emperor with a long beard donning the *loros* and holding in his left hand a *globus cruciger* with

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[226] For an illustration of the specimen in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, see Franz Füeg, "Ein Bleisiegel der Kaiserin Zoe. 10. Dezember 1041-18. April 1042.," *Schweizer Münzblätter* 38 (1988): pp. 76-78, especially p. 77, fig. 5; for an illustration of the obverse of the specimen in the State Hermitage Museum, see Yuri Piatnitsky et al., eds., *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century* (London, St. Petersburg: Saint Catherine Foundation and the State Hermitage Museum, 2000), p. 86, no. B61L.

[227] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, p. 729; also see Piatnitsky et al., eds., *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia. Orthodox Art from the Sixth to the Twentieth Century*, p. 86.

[228] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, p. 727. For a discussion of the iconography of the Christ Antiphonites, see Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*, pp. 142-148.

[229] See a detailed description of the events involving this icon in Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), Book 6, 66-70, pp. 188-189.

patriarchal cross. Unfortunately the features of the faces have been rubbed off. Grierson proposed the following reading for the obverse legend: *..]IN(or H)OA(or A)C(or Є)ωNЄNIAAΓOI[* , which however he was unable to make sense of.[230] The reverse does not seem to show an inscription, yet it is hard to make out whether the markings that survive along the upper rim of the coin above the head of the emperor, are the remnants of a decorative design or of an inscription. Given the worn quality of the coin Grierson's reading must remain tentative. It is possible that the middle of the legend contains the words *Zoe en th a(u)g*, for the letter preceding the omega could be a badly rubbed zeta, and the N after the omega could be an eta. While Grierson's attribution of the coin to Zoe and Constantine VIII may be possible, his dating the coin to 1041-1042 seems arbitrary. If it was a commemorative coin, it would fit better immediately after the death of Zoe's father in 1028 than more than a decade later.

There is another coin attested with the image of Zoe, only known in a drawing published in 1904. Grierson suggested that this copper coin also served as a pattern, based on its size and iconography, most likely for the *milaresion* (Fig. 56). The obverse represents the bust of the orans Virgin with the legend ΘKЄ B,Θ,, while the reverse shows a bust of Zoe, holding a scepter with a trefoil ornament in her right hand and a *globus cruciger* in her left. The empress wears a crown with pinnacles and pendilia, and a *loros* with a high collar. The legend identifies her as *+IωHAЧΓOЧST.*[231] This coin is remarkably similar to the first known lead seal of Zoe, which appeared on the art market in 1986 and was published two years later by Füeg (Fig. 57). The design, legends, and size of this seal are virtually identical with the copper coin known from the 1904 drawing, which indicates that perhaps that piece was misidentified and is in fact a second specimen of her lead seals.[232] It is likely that Zoe employed the image of the orans Virgin on her seal in order to connect herself with her grandmother, Anastasia-Theophano, who perhaps initiated Zoe into the devotion of the icon of the orans Virgin at the Blachernai.

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[230] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 728, 730.
[231] Ibid. , III/2, pp. 728, 730.
[232] Füeg, "Ein Bleisiegel der Kaiserin Zoe. 10. Dezember 1041-18. April 1042."

The histamenon of Zoe and Theodora issued during their joint reign, 20 April – 11 June 1042 represents the bust of the orans Virgin with the Christ child hovering in front of her breast in a medallion (sometimes called Episkepis) with the legend *+ΘKERΘTACRACIAICCIC* on the obverse, while the reverse shows identical busts of the empresses holding a labarum between them with the legend *+ZωHN SΘЄCOΔω'* (Fig. 58). The empresses are dressed in identical *loroi* and wear the same type of crown with projections and pendilia described above on Zoe's coins. Their faces are also identical and are similar to the likeness of Zoe rendered on her copper coins in Istanbul and Moscow. The legends along the busts give their names without titles. Zoe's higher rank is expressed by her placement on the right and by her gesture of grasping the labarum at a higher point along its shaft. Psellos's detailed description of court procedures during the reign of the empresses reveals that Zoe enjoyed a more exalted position, which was articulated by her physical placement during audiences, she was seated slightly in front of her sister.[233]

Theodora's numismatic and sphargistic representations are more ample than her sister's, for after the death of Zoe's widowed last husband, Constantine IX Monomachos in January 1055, Theodora assumed sole power and ruled for the next eighteen months (11 January 1055 – 31 August 1056). During this period Theodora issued gold *histamena* and *tetartera* in great numbers, as well as a small issue of silver *milaresia*,[234] gold bullae, lead seals, and silver weights. The obverses of her *histamena* represent a figure of Christ standing atop a *suppedion* blessing with his right hand and holding a book in his left (Fig. 59).[235] The legend states: *+IhSXISDCX RCSNANTIhm.* The reverse shows the standing figure of the empress dressed in the loros with the characteristic kite-shaped fold that became fashionable on robes of empresses in the eleventh century and crown with pinnacles and pendilia as she receives the *labarum* from the standing figure of the Virgin on her left. The empress holds her right hand in front of her breast gesturing towards the Virgin while she grasps the shaft of the labarum with the left. The Virgin holds the

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[233] Psellus, 1966 #702], Book 6, 3-4, p. 156.
[234] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, p. 748.
[235] Mango suggested that it may represent the Christ Chalkites, see Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*, p. 140.

labarum with her right hand at the top of its shaft and lifts her left palm in front of her chest echoing the blessing gesture of Christ on the other side, and reciprocating Theodora's gesture. The Virgin is identified by the sigla *MΘ*.[236] Theodora's *tetartera* represent the bust of Christ blessing with his right hand held in front of his chest and immediately next to it holding a book in his left, flanked by the sigla IC XC (Fig. 60). The bust of the empress clad in the *loros* with a high collar and wearing a crown with pinnacles and double pendilia appears on the reverse. She holds a beaded scepter in her right hand and a *globus cruciger* in her left. The legend identifies the empress as *+ΘЄOΔωPA AVTOVCTA*. Theodora's *milaresia* do not carry her image, but show the orans Virgin identified as Blachernitissa *(HPAAAXЄP NITICA)* on the obverse, and an inscription on the reverse: *+ΘKЄ ROHΘЄI OЄOΔωPA ΔЄCΠOINH THΠORΦV POΓЄNN Tω* (Fig. 61).[237]

A unique silver weight survives from the reign of Theodora in the shape of a disc, which combines the iconographic types of her *milaresia* and *tetartera*.[238] The obverse of the seal shows the bust of the orans Virgin with the sigla *MΘ ΘV* and the inscription *OYITTIA MIA* (one ounce), while the reverse shows the bust of the empress clad in the *loros*, holding a beaded scepter in her right and a *globus cruciger* in her left (Fig. 62). She wears a crown with pinnacles and double pendilia. An evocative inscription is found along the edge of the weight: *+ΘKЄ ROHΘЄI ΘЄOΔωPA AVTOVTTH ΠOPOVP ΓЄNHTO*. Although this piece has been identified as a weight, there is an inconsistency between its weight (33 g) and the proposed actual weight of the pound in the eleventh century. Theodora's weight would suggest that a pound weighed c. 396 g, yet other evidence suggests that a pound was much smaller.[239]

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[236] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, pp. 750-752.
[237] Ibid., III/2, pp. 752-753.
[238] For a discussion of this piece, see Christopher J. S. Entwistle and Michael Cowell, "A Note on a Middle Byzantine Silver Weight," in *Thumiama ste mneme tes Laskarinas Boura* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1994), 91-93, pls. 47-48; David Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections.* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), pp. 149-150, no. 164; Simon Bendall, *Byzantine Weights. An Intorduction* (London: The Lennox Gallery, 1996), pp. 22-23, no. 21.
[239] Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections.*, p. 150; and *Litra* in ODB II/1238, where the following measurements are given for the Byzantine pound 324g, 319g, 337.6g, 333g.

A four-*solidus* gold bulla of Theodora is preserved at Dumbarton Oaks.[240] Its obverse represents the bust of the mature, bearded Christ blessing with his right hand held in front of his chest and holding a book in his left hand with the legend ..*MMA NOVHA IC XC* (Fig. 63). The style of the effigy of Christ is different from the portrait of Christ shown on Theodora's *tetartera*. On the *tetartera* the face of Christ is elongated with a long beard and he holds his right hand in front of his chest immediately next to the book in a gesture of blessing, whereas on the seal Christ's face is round, he has a short beard, and his bust is shown wider with his right arm off to his right side. The reverse shows Theodora's bust dressed in the *loros* with a high, jeweled collar and wearing a crown with a cross and four spikes decorated with clusters of pellets and with two pendilia terminating in trefoils. Theodora's face is round and youthful. In her right hand she carries the labarum and in her left she lifts a globe surmounted by a trefoil. The legend reads *+ΘЄOΔ ωPA AVTOVC'*. The *Book of Ceremonies* provides a list describing what denomination gold bullae were appropriate for what recipients and occasions, and informs us, that in the tenth century, four-*solidus* gold *bullae* were used on imperial correspondence addressed to the caliph of Baghdad and the sultan of Egypt.[241]

Theodora also left behind several lead seals that carry busts of Christ and the empress on their two sides. These seals show two different versions of the imperial effigy, while the representation of Christ is identical on them. On the first variant, which carries a larger image (Fig. 64),[242] the figure of Christ is shown with his right hand raised in a gesture of blessing in front of his shoulder and with his left hand holding a book. He has a short beard and is identified by the legend as *+ЄMMA NOVHA IC XC*. The empress appears dressed in the *loros* with a high collar and wears a heavy crown encrusted with jewels indicated by pellets along its band, from which hang pendilia

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[240] See, Philip Grierson, "Byzantine Gold Bullae, With a Catalogue of those at Dumbarton Oaks," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966): 239-53, fig. 3, 8. It was also published in Oikonomides, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 6, fig. 7. For a discussion of how gold bullae were produced up to the end of the eleventh century, see ibid. p. 244-245. Although the first gold bulla survives from the reign of Basil I, Grierson suggested that textual evidence indicates they may have been used as early as the beginning of the ninth century, ibid. p. 240.

[241] ibid, p. 239; Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 4. Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, 48, p. 689, for seals sent to the sultan of Egypt.

[242] See Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 74, pl. fig. 82a; Bank, *Iskusstvo vizantii v sobraniiakh SSSR: Katalog vystavki* , no. 688; Werner Seibt, *Die Byzantinische Bleisigel in Österreich* (Wien: 1978), pp. 88-90, no. 19. The diameter of the imprinted image is about 30 mm on a 35 mm flan.

terminating in trefoils. Three large triangular projections decorated with pellets and surmounted by trefoils spring from the band of the crown and clusters of four pellets appear between the triangular projections. The empress holds a cruciform scepter sprouting tendrils at the base of the cross in her right hand, while she gestures with her left hand to the right, presumably to the other side of the coin emblazoned with the effigy of Christ. The legend states: *+ΘЄOΔω PAAVTO VCTAHΠOPΦ,P,ΓЄN,T,.*[243] The second variant is stamped with a smaller image (Fig. 65).[244] The iconography and legend of Christ is identical with that found on the first variant, while the image of the empresses differs slightly, she now carries a scepter that is beaded on its top and terminates in a trefoil. The legend gives the same name and titles as on the other seals, with a slightly different orthography.

The epithet Emmanuel was first introduced into imperial seals by Basil II,[245] but once it was established all emperors gave this title to the effigy of Christ on their seals for the next century.[246] Although the epithet was not used on silver and gold coins, it appeared on the anonymous folles ca. 970 during the reign of Basil's predecessor, John Tzimiskes, and was employed until the mid-eleventh century, and then was revived for a short time on the folles of Constantine X and Eudokia Makrembolitissa in the second half of the eleventh century. On the anonymous folles the image of Christ and the legend Emmanuel was combined with another legend on the reverse of the coin, *+IhSЧS XRISTЧS bASILЄЧ bASILЄ'* until the 1040s (Fig. 11), when the reverse legend was changed to *IC XC NIKA*. On seals, however, only the legend Emmanuel was inscribed, accompanied by the sigla *IC XC*. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Tzimiskes may have employed this iconography and legend on his copper coins in order to underscore his policy of expansion and conversion. It is, however, not clear why he

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[243] See Seibt, *Die Byzantinische Bleisigel in Österreich* , p. 89.
[244] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , p. 75, no. 82, pl. fig. 82b. The diameter of the imprinted image is 25mm on a 39 mm flan.
[245] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , p. 155.
[246] The tradition was broken by Michael VII Doukas (1071-78), who returned to simply employing the *IC XC* sigla on his seals, but was revived again a few decades later by Alexios Komnenos.

may have chosen the epithet Emmanuel, and why did this type become so popular on anonymous *folles* and on imperial seals.[247]

From the Komnenian period the representation of the Emmanuel was established as a young, beardless youth.[248] However, before this standardization took place, the epithet appeared with different types of Christ, as on the 6th century pilgrims' ampullae from Monza, where the scene of the Adoration of the Magi is inscribed with it, on the Ancient of Days icon at Sinai dated to the seventh century, on tenth-eleventh century coins and seals, where it accompanies the figure of the mature, bearded, long haired Christ of the so-called Pantokrator type, the Antiphonites type, and the seated, enthroned Christ, and from the mid-eleventh century it is also found on images of the young Christ, as in the Theodore Psalter dated to 1066, and the Paris gr. 74 also from the second half of the eleventh century, and at Karanlik Kilisse in Göreme, that may date to the mid-eleventh century.[249] The designation, Emmanuel is derived from Isaiah 7,14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" and Matthew 1, 23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Clearly, in the biblical texts the name Emmanuel draws attention to the miracle of the incarnation.[250] Annamarie Weyl Carr suggested that the image of the child Christ Emmanuel of the eleventh and twelfth centuries has three major messages: the Christological emphasis on the Eucharist; the soteriological promise of the messianic Christ; and the typological embodiment of Mosaic prophecy, [251] yet it is unclear that the same primary messages can be attributed to images of the mature Christ labeled Emmanuel. Jane Timken Matthews suggested that

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[247] For a discussion of the epithets of Christ on Byzantine lead seals, see Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" , pp. 155-161.
[248] For a discussion of the young Christ Emmanuel, see Wessel and Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* , I, pp. 1008-1010.
[249] Engelbert Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Rome, Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder, 1968), I, pp. 390-391; Jane Timken Matthews, "The Pantocrator: Title and Image" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 1976), pp. 60-67; Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Gospel Frontispieces From the Comnenian Period," *Gesta* 21, no. 1 (1982): pp. 3-20, especially p. 8, n. 51.
[250] Isaiah 7,14 was part of the readings for the feast of the Nativity in the Orthodox Church, see Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* , p. 390.
[251] Carr, "Gospel Frontispieces From the Comnenian Period," p. 9.

on the Monza ampullae and on images of the mature, bearded Christ the label Emmanuel "is probably intended not as a name, but as a message meaning 'God is with us.'"[252]

On the folles the legends Emmanuel and *basileus basile* bring together two different aspects of Christ as the incarnate presence of God, and his royal power as the ultimate ruler; these in turn endow the Byzantine emperor, under whose authority they were issued, both with the continued presence of god and a clear expression of the source of imperial power. Tzimiskes, a usurper, was greatly concerned with the legitimacy of his reign, a preoccupation that is made visible on his gold coins as well. Here, the emperor follows the iconography of the gold coinage of his predecessor by employing the bust of Christ with the legend *rex regnantium* on the obverse and half-length portraits of himself and the Virgin on the reverse with the invocation *+ΘЄOTOC'bOHΘ'Iω δЄSP*, however, with three significant modifications. It is now the emperor who is placed on the right side of the coin in the place of precedence, he is not simply receiving a cross from the Virgin but she is crowning him (or is blessing his crown),[253] and the blessing hand of god too appears above the emperor's head. The gesture of dropping the imperial image from the copper coinage is significant, for the imperial likeness had been emblazoned on the follis for centuries. His gold and copper coins clearly articulate the imperial message differently, but ultimately they communicate part of the same overall message albeit with different emphases. The disappearance of the imperial effigy and legend from the follis gives room to an articulation of different aspects of Christ, as the Pantocrator, as the presence of God, and as the ruler of all rulers which ultimately all refer back to the imperial office and the empire as a whole. Tzimiskes may have selected these new epithets for his copper coins in order to curry favor with the lower echelons of society by referring to his power only obliquely and stating that the empire and by extension his own power is guaranteed because of the continued presence and over-lordship of Christ, god incarnate. Moreover, Grierson is undoubtedly right in suggesting that the decoration of the coinage may have also served the expansionist policy of the emperor, who after decisively defeating the Russians in Bulgaria turned his attention to Syria-Palestine and

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[252] Matthews, "The Pantocrator: Title and Image," p. 61.
[253] The composition is very similar to that found on the ivory scepter of Leo VI.

had aspirations for the re-conquest of Jerusalem. An emphasis on the Christian God and his continued presence and favor on behalf of the Byzantines would have served his policies in the outlying territories where the currency could have circulated widely.

Finally, a further tentative suggestion may be offered for the reasons why Tzimiskes decided to replace the imperial image on his coins. It is well-attested in contemporary sources that Tzimiskes rebuilt, lavishly redecorated, and endowed the chapel of the Savior over the Chalke Gate in Constantinople between 971 and 976, and placed his sarcophagus in the newly appointed structure.[254] Mango argued that the new church was built following the typical middle Byzantine cross in square plan with a central dome, and that it was decorated with mosaics representing Christ, the four evangelists, and apostles.[255] It is possible that the new type of *follis* introduced by Tzimiskes commemorated this mosaic representations of Christ which may have been inscribed with the legend Emmanuel and which clearly had personal importance for the emperor. Both the refurbishing of the chapel and the introduction of the image of Christ on the coinage had been associated with Tzimiskes's Bulgarian campaigns in the writings of Byzantine historians, which may suggest a connection between the two, and Skyliztes even reports about them in the same paragraph.[256] The practice of placing an image of a revered icon on imperial coinage is not unusual in the middle Byzantine period, as attested for instance by Zoe's coins showing Christ Antiphonites. If Tzimiskes's coin indeed commemorated an image inside the Chapel of the Savior at the Chalke, that would explain why consecutive emperors retained this iconography, an image intimately associated with the exercise of imperial authority due to its location.

Coins and Seals of Eudokia Makrembolitissa

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[254] Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* , pp. 149-152 references Leo Diaconus, see C. B. Hase, *Leo Diaconus* (Bonn: 1828), pp. 128-9, and Zonaras, T. Büttner-Wobst, *Ioannes Zonaras* (Bonn: 1897), III, p. 536. After the reign of Nikephoros Phokas, who preceded Tzimiskes, the Chalke Gate no longer functioned as a vestibule of the imperial palace, for it lost that function after new perimeter walls were erected around the Great Palace, see ODB, I, p. 406.

[255] See Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* , pp. 167-8. The sources also inform us that Tzimiskes gave the church various votive gifts, relics, a miraculous icon by the name of Berytus icon that represents the Crucifixion, and an estate, see ibid., pp. 149-152.

[256] See above, p. 79.

Theodora, the last member of the Macedonian dynasty, died without an heir in 1056. Her death precipitated a political crisis and three emperors followed one anther within the three years following her death, Michael VI (1056-1057), Isaak Komnenos (1057-1059), Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067). Eudokia Makrembolitissa was the second wife of Constantine X and was the first imperial consort in over a century to appear on coins during the lifetime of her husband. Although her effigy did not appear on the gold coins, it was placed on the rare issue of the *milaresion* and on one issue of the *folles*. The obverse of the *milaresion* carries the legend: *+KωN SЄVΔOKIA ΠICTOIRA CILEICPω MAIωN*, the reverse depicts a cross crosslet on steps with small busts of the emperor and empresses floating below the arms of the cross with the inscription: *ENTOVTUNIKATEKωNKAIЄVΔKIAN* (Fig. 66). The miniature loros-clad busts of the imperial couple are virtually indistinguishable from one another, save for the shape of the crown: Eudokia's crown carries three triangular projections with pellets between them, while Constantine's crown is only surmounted by a cross.[257] This iconography of the *milaresion* was introduced by Basil II. The first class of the *folles* also represents Eudokia and Constantine together, this time as standing figures holding a labarum placed on steps between them on the reverse (Fig. 67).[258] It is for the first time in about eight decades that *folles* were minted showing the name and effigy of the emperor. Unlike the issue of the *milaresion*, the first issue of the *folles* was large.[259] Eudokia appears on the right side of the cross, in the position of precedence; however, it is Constantine whose hand is placed in the higher position along the shaft of the *labarum*. With their other hands, which they hold in similar positions in front of their chests, they gesture towards each other. The features of their faces are not possible to make out due to the erosion of the coins. They wear crowns with pendilia and central cross and the *loros*, and Eudokia's garment is draped in the shape of a shield (referred to as the *thorakion*), typical for the

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[257] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, p. 771. Only four surviving specimens of this milaresion were known to Grierson, see ibid., p. 765, n. 7.

[258] Ibid., pp. 774-776.

[259] For a chart showing the surviving numbers of specimens of this issue in some museums and excavations, see ibid. , p. 642. Some specimens of Class II of Constantine X's *folles* were over-struck on those of Class I, which establishes the relative chronology of the two issues. Specimens of both Class I and II were also over-struck on earlier anonymous *folles*, see ibid., p. 766, 774-778.

loros of empresses of the eleventh century. The legend reads: *+KωNTΔK ЄVΔKAVTO.* The obverse of the coin represents a figure of Christ standing on a *suppedion.* His right hand is raised in blessing and his left holds a book. The legend identifies him as *+ЄMMA NOVHL IC XC.*

Eudokia was widowed in May of 1067 and ruled alone as regent for the next seven months, for her sons Michael, Constantius, and Andronicus were too young to assume power, until she married Romanos IV in January 1068.[260] These changes in the exercise of power are reflected on the coins minted during Eudokia's regency and the reign of Romanos IV. During the regency Eudokia issued *histamena* and *tetartera*. The obverse of the *histamena* represent the enthroned Christ seated on a square-backed throne with his right hand raised in blessing and his left hand holding a book.[261] His figure is surrounded by the customary inscription, *+IhSXISRCX RCSNANTIhm,* albeit with an increasingly erratic spelling (Fig. 68). The obverse depicts a triad of standing imperial figures dressed in the *loros*. Eudokia, the tallest figure in the center of the group stands on a *suppedion* and holds a beaded scepter in her right hand and rests her left hand on her breast. Her *loros* is shown with the kite-shaped fold, and her crown has three triangular projections and pendilia. The two shorter figures on her left and right are her sons, Michael and Constantius, whose age is indicated by the slight difference in their heights - Michael is a little taller than his brother. The faces of the figures are too small to wear any kind of distinguishing features. They wear the male version of the *loros* draped horizontally across their hips and crowns with pendilia and a cross and carry globes in one hand and *akakiai* in the other hand as mirror images of one another. The composition recalls the representation of the family of another empresses named Eudokia in the manuscript offered to the emperor Basil I and his family by the patriarch Photios about 200 years earlier. The legend is highly abbreviated due to the lack of space as, *+MIX ЄЧ ΔK KωNS.* The *tetarteron* is known from one specimen only and introduces

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[260] See N. Oikonomides, "Le serment de l'impératrice Eudocie (1067). Un épisode de l'histoire dynastique de Byzance," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 21 (1963): pp. 101-28 for Eudokia's wow not to remarry after the death of Constantine X; for the circumstances of her regency and second marriage, see Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 601.

[261] See Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, III/2, pp. 781, 783.

an iconography that will be followed on the coins of the next two emperors, Romans IV and Michael VII, Eudokia's second husband and son, respectively (Fig. 69).[262] It displays a bust of the Virgin holding the Christ child in a disk in front of her breast and inscribed with the customary evocation, *+ΘΚЄ ROHΘ*. The reverse shows two imperial busts dressed in the *loros* and crowns with pendilia holding a cross scepter between them. The empress appears on the right side of the cross and grasps its shaft at the higher point, her figure is slightly larger and her crown is decorated with globular projections missing from the crown of Michael. The legend *+ЄVΔOKIA SMIXAHARC* surrounds the figures.

Eudokia's lead seals have come down to us in large numbers. Two seal types represent her alone without imperial colleagues, while the other three show her with an increasing number of family members. The first type of seal shows a standing figure of the orans Virgin with the Christ child hovering in front of her breast in a medallion.[263] The legend only comprises the sigla MP ΘV. On the reverse, the empress appears standing dressed in the *loros* draped with the kite-shaped ending, she holds a cruciform scepter in her right hand while she lifts her left hand in front of her chest (Fig. 70). Her crown sports triangular projections and double pendilia. The legend identifies her as *+[Є]VΔOK[K]IAЄVCЄ RЄCTATHAVTŏCTA*. Zacos-Veglery suggested that this specimen was probably issued during one of Eudokia's regencies in 1067 or 1071. This need not be assumed, however. Eudokia appeared on the coins of both of her husbands with frequency and it is conceivable that she would have had seals produced in her own name during this period. Unfortunately the extant and published evidence of seals of empresses issued during the lifetime of their consorts is limited to the seal of Theodora in the ninth century. As mentioned above, this seal shows a bust of the emperor rather than the empress. I suggested above that the seal of Anastasia-Theophano with the representation of the empress need not belong to the period of her regency but may have been produced during the reign of one of her husbands, or son. Moreover, Zoe and Theodora have issued seals with their likeness only a few decades prior to Eudokia's elevation, albeit under different circumstances, and thus would have provided a recent precedent to follow. The second seal type shows busts of the same figures, the orans

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[262] Ibid., pp. 781-782, 784.
[263] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, p. 80, no. 89.

Virgin, now without the medallion containing the Christ child, on the obverse, and the bust of the empress wearing a crown with three large triangular projections, pinnacles, double pendilia and a *loros* (Fig. 71).[264] She holds a scepter with a trefoil top in her right hand.[265] The bust of the empresses is very similar to the representation of the purple-born Theodora on her lead seals, with the difference that Eudokia holds the scepter diagonally in front of her chest rather than vertically. The legend of the obverse gives the sigla *MP ΘV*, and on the reverse it reads *+ЄVΔOKIA AVГ*..... The seals of Eudokia's first regency[266] closely follow the iconography of the *histamena*: the obverse represents the enthroned Christ on a square-backed throne, but this time his right arm is stretched out in a gesture of blessing; the reverse shows the empress with her sons in the same attires and with the same insignia as on the coins (Fig. 72). The legends differ from those on the coins, Christ is given the epithet *+ЄMMA NOVHA* and the sigla *IC XC*, and the imperial figures are identified as *+ЄVΔOK, MIX, SKωN CT R'P'*.

Hystamena were produced representing all members of the imperial family after Eudokia married Romanos IV in 1068.[267] The obverse (convex side) represents the three sons of Eudokia, Michael, Constantius, and Andronicus, with Michael, the oldest in the center, in a composition similar to the imperial group on the regency coins (Fig. 73). The boys wear identical *loroi*, the two younger ones hold globes surmounted by crosses in their hands, while Michael stands in the middle holding a labrum diagonally in front of his body.[268] The legend *KωN MX ANΔ* accompanies their figures. The reverse shows the standing figures of Romanos and Eudokia crowned or blessed by the figure of Christ standing between them atop a *suppedion*. Romanos stands on the right of Christ and holds a *globus cruciger* in his left hand, while Eudokia stands on Christ's left also holding a *globus cruciger* in her right hand. The imperial couple is dressed in *loroi*, Eudokia's *loros* is shown with the kite-shaped fold, and Romanos' *loros* is brought straight across his hip with its end hanging from his left arm. The legend gives their

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[264] Ibid. , p. 81, no. 90.
[265] The position of the left hand is unclear.
[266] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , pp. 81-92, no. 91.
[267] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 786-787, 790-792.
[268] The *hystamena* were issued with two slightly different designs. On Class I the boys stand on separate *suppedia*, while on Class II they share a single ground line standing on the same dais.

names only: *RωMANS ЄVΔUKIA*. The iconography of the imperial couple blessed by Christ standing between them ultimately derives from the marriage *solidi* of the fifth century, but, it has also been popular in other media in the middle Byzantine period, such as ivories and manuscripts. The *tetarteron* issued during Romanos' reign closely follows Eudokia's *tetarteron*: it shows the bust of the orans Virgin holding a medallion of the Christ child in front of her with the inscription *+ΘKЄ ROHΘ* and *MP ΘV*, and shows the imperial couple dressed in *loroi* jointly holding a cross on top a globe between them (Fig. 74). Here, Romanos is placed on the right side of the cross, yet the imperial figures are holding the globe between them, which does not allow the articulation of precedence visually. The legend states: *+IωMANSЄVΔKRIM*. There is a copper pattern designed for a *tetarteron* at the Bibliothèque National in Paris, which shows the busts of Romanos and Eudokia on their two sides. Eudokia appears on the obverse dressed in the loros, and a crown with pinnacles and pendilia, and holds a *labarum* in her right hand diagonally across her chest and a globus cruciger in her left, while Romanos appears on the reverse, also dressed in the loros and a crown with a cross and pendilia. He holds an *akakia* in his right hand and a *globus cruciger* in his left. The legends read: *eudo basil, Roman' desp*.[269]

Two types of seals survive from the reign of Romanos IV; the first includes four, the second five imperial figures. The first type shows similar compositions on its two sides: two imperial figures crowned or blessed by a holy figure standing between them. The obverse shows the two elder sons of Eudokia, Michael and Constantius flanking the figure of the Virgin who stands on a square footstool between them and crowns or blesses the heads of the two princes with her hands (Fig. 75). The boys are dressed in *loroi* and hold globes and *akakiai* in their hands. The sigla *MP ΘV* identifies the Virgin. The letters *MX* serve as an abbreviation of Michael's name while the rest of the legend with the name of his brother is lost, however, he is most likely Constantius. The reverse shows Romanos and Eudokia being crowned by Christ, in the same manner they are

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[269] Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale* , II, p. 651; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, p. 787.

depicted on the hystamena. The legend states: *+RωM... ЄVΔ'K'R'P'M.*[270] The second type of lead seal shows exactly the same iconography as found on the *histamena* of Romanos' reign, and thus the imperial college now includes the youngest heir Andronikos as well (Fig. 76).[271]

Coins of Maria of Alania

The sister-in-law of Eudokia, the Georgian-born Maria appeared on the *tetartera* and *milaresia* of her first husband, Michael VII, however, was also given a place on the coins of her second husband, Nikephoros Botaniates. The *tetartera* of Michael VII continued the iconography established by her mother and continued by Romanos IV, with the bust of the Virgin holding a medallion of the Christ child in front of her breast on the obverse, and the busts of the imperial couple holding a cross between them on the reverse (Fig. 77). The design of the cross, held between the figures is different, but otherwise one can only notice minor differences in the rendering of the clothing and insignia. The legends also continue the tradition: *+ΘKЄ ROHΘ*, and *+MIX AHΛ MAPIA.*[272] Michael's *milaresia* also follow the established iconography introduced by Basil II with imperial busts by the two sides of a cross crosslet used by Michael's father. The inscription on the obverse reads: *ЄNTUTωNIKATЄ MIXAHΛSMAPIA*, on the reverse it states: *MIXAHΛ KAIMAPIA ΠICTOIRA CIΛЄICPω MAIωN* (Fig. 78).[273] The two-thirds *milaresia* follow the same iconography, except that the reverse inscription now states *+ΘKЄR,Θ, MIXAHΛ ΔЄCΠOTH TωΔUKA* (Fig. 79).[274] *Milaresia* issued by Nikephoros Botaniates, Maria's second husband follow the typical design of the *milaresion* but they are made of low quality silver. Inscription on obverse, *+ NIKHΦP KAIMAPIA ΠICTOIRA CIΛЄICPω MAIωN*, on reverse with the cross and busts, *[+NIKHΦKAIMAPIAЄNTOVT]ωNIKATЄ* (Fig. 80).[275]

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[270] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 92, pp. 82-83.
[271] Ibid. , no. 93, p. 83.
[272] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 807-809.
[273] Ibid. , III/2, pp. 810-812.
[274] Ibid. , III/2, pp. 813-815.
[275] Ibid. , III/2, p. 829.

Seals of Female Imperial Family Members

A handful of seals of female imperial family members survive which belong to mothers of empresses, daughters of junior or senior emperors, and sisters of the emperor. Although these objects do not carry representations either of the emperor or the owner of the seal, they will be discussed here briefly to create a wider context for the seals of empresses. The earliest of these seals belongs to Theoktista, the mother of the empress Theodora of the ninth century, who had received the title *zoste patrikia*, the highest female dignity of the imperial court. Her seal is decorated with a cruciform invocative monogram, that has been transcribed as *Θεοτόκε βοήθει*, surrounded by a further inscription giving her name and title: *...KTICTHCZOCTHSΠATPI....* read as *(Θεο)κτίστης ζοστησ πατρικ(ίας)* on the obverse, and continues with the inscription *+KAIMHTHPTHCBASIΛЄICHC* transcribed as *και μήτηρ της βασιείσης* (Fig. 81).[276] A further seals survives from Maria, the mother of the empress Anastasia/Theophano from the mid-tenth century. The obverse of this seal represents the bust of the Virgin with her palms lifted up in front of her chest and surrounded by the sigla and invocation: *MP ΘV +ΘKЄROHΘ'THCHΛ....* read as Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθ(ει) τη ση δ(ούλη), with the inscription continuing on the reverse: **+MARIAMHT.IΘЄOΦANŏCAVTŏCTIC** transcribed as *Μαρία μητ(ρ)ι Θεοφανους αυγούστις* (Fig. 82).[277] The iconography of the Virgin is not identical with that found on the seals of her daughter, where the Virgin appears in the full orans position with her arms lifted up, moreover, Maria's seal also includes the sigla *MP ΘV* while her daughter's does not.

An additional seal belongs to a certain Maria, identified by the legend as the daughter of a junior emperor. The obverse shows the bust of the Virgin holding a

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[276] Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 48, Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , 1083. For Theoktista see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" , p. 124.
[277] Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 68, and Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 2675. For a discussion of this relatively rare iconographic type of the Virgin, which was popular on seals in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 93-95. Also see Hunger's comments, who understands this iconographic type as 'Minimalorantengestus,' Hunger, "Heimsuchung und Schirmherrschaft über Welt und Menschheit," p. 34, n. 5.

clypeus with the Christ child and surrounded by the legend *+ΘKЄROIΘHTICHΔ'* read as *Θ(εοτό)κε βο(ή)θ(ει) τ(η) ση δ(ούλη)*, while the reverse continues the inscription: *+MARHAΘVTATPHTOVSCAROC* transcribed as *Μαρ(ί)α θυγατρ(ί) του καίσαροσ* (Fig. 83).[278] Zacos and Veglery dated it after 843 based on its style and iconography but were unable to offer a secure identification for its owner beyond suggesting three possible candidates: Maria, the daughter of Theophilos and Theodora, who was betrothed to the Caesar Alexios Mousele; or a daughter of Bardas, the brother of the empress Theodora; or a daughter of Petronas, Theodora's other brother.[279] There are however difficulties with these suggestions: it is not clear whether Maria and Alexios did indeed marry or were only betrothed to one another, and more importantly, Maria appears to have died c. 838 during the reign of her father, and thus seems unlikely that she would have possessed a seal with an image of the Virgin given her father's iconoclastic policy. Neither Bardas nor Petronas are known to have had a daughter named Maria; while three children of Bardas are known from textual sources, only one of them was a daughter, and she was named Irene, and we lack information about the offspring of Petronas altogether. Yet, there are other possible identifications for the owner of the seal. Basil I had a daughter named Maria who may have been his daughter from his first wife, also named Maria, although most scholars believe she was his daughter by his second wife, Eudokia Ingerina. Maria was buried separately from Basil's other three daughters who were all buried together and she may have even been allowed to marry a man named Christophoros;[280] these differences in treatment may indicate that Maria was Basil's daughter from his first marriage. Thus the seal may belong to a daughter of Basil I and may have been produced while her father served as Caesar to Michael III in 866-867.[281] Another possible owner of the seal may be suggested based on the fact that its style and iconography not only fit into the ninth century but also accord well with seals of the early tenth century, as exemplified by the lead tesserae of Constantine VII and Zoe struck ca.

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[278] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 2673.
[279] For Maria, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 68, for Bardas, see ibid., pp. 124-125, for Petronas, see ibid., pp. 128-129.
[280] Ibid., p. 78.
[281] A. Vogt, *Basil Ier empereur de Byzance (867-886) et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du IXe siècle* (Paris: 1908), p. 59 proposed the possibility that Basil's daughters were born of his first marriage.

914-919, which show the same iconography and a similar figure style.[282] A possible candidate may be Maria Lekapena, the daughter of Christopher, the eldest son of Romanos I Lekapenos. Christopher was crowned co-emperor with his father in May 919 and his daughter Maria married the Bulgarian tsar Peter in 927, thus the seal may date to the period between May 919 and the autumn of 927.[283]

To another princess, Theodora, the daughter of an emperor Constantine born in the purple belongs a copper token used most likely for the distribution of alms. The copper tessera carries a bust of Christ Pantokrator encircled by the legend +*KЄROHΘЄITHCHΔOVΛ* transcribed as *Κύριε, βοήθει τη ση δούλη*, on the obverse, and a cruciform monogram giving the name *ΘЄOΔωPA* with further legends *ΘVTA KωNC ΠORΦ ΔЄCΠ* read as *θυγατρι Κωνσταντίνου πορφυρογεννήτου δεσπότου* surrounded by a scalloped motif on the reverse (Fig. 84). Veglery and Zacos' argued for a tenth century date, because: "the cruciform monogram inscribed in the four angles and the eight-lobed envelope belong to the tenth rather than the eleventh century," suggesting that it should be ascribed to the daughter of Constantine VII ca. 945-969 rather of Constantine VIII in the eleventh century.[284] However, if one inspects the orthography of the legend on the reverse, it leads to a different conclusion. While Constantine VII spells his name on his coins typically with the letters COn rather than KωN, and where the word Porphyrogennetos is included, it is spelled with an F and not a Φ, and he favors the titles *basileus* or *augustus* over *despot*, Constantine IX, the predecessor and brother-in-law of Theodora in the eleventh century has two-thirds milaresia on which his name is written with the letters KωN and is accompanied by the title *despot*. Moreover, on her own two-third *milaresion*, Theodora also uses the title despot and spells porphyrogennita with Φ, thus the paleography indicates that the token should be attributed to Theodora, the daughter of Constantine VIII. While cruciform monograms were more popular in the

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[282] For the lead tesserae of Constantine VII and Zoe, see Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 57, and Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 64. Another similar seal comes from the late ninth or early tenth century from Athens that belonged to the metropolitan Sabbas, see Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 56.

[283] See Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" and Jonathan Shepard, "A Marriage Too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria," in *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the Frist Millenium*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 121-49.

[284] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 2676.

tenth century, they were still found in the eleventh century, and thus an attribution to Theodora of the eleventh century is possible.[285]

Two further seals belong to the nun Maria, a sister of an emperor Constantine. On its obverse, it shows a bust of the Virgin orant with the Christ child hovering on her chest, and surrounded by the sigla *MP ΘV* (Fig. 85). The reverse provides a typical invocation to the Virgin on behalf of the seals' owner: *+ΘKЄ(R,Θ), MAPIAATH ΠANTIMωS A(V)TAΔЄΛΦ, KωNΔЄCΠOT*, transcribed as *Θεοτόκε βοήθει Μαρία μοναχη τη παντίμω και ανταδελφη Κωνσταντίνου δεσπότου.*[286] Veglery and Zacos accepted Laurent's attribution of the seal either to a sister of Constantine IX Monomanchos (1042-1055) or a sister of Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067), thus it may be dated with no more precision than the quarter century ranging between 1042 and 1067.[287] The iconographic type of the Virgin with the hovering medallion was first introduced into coins by the empresses Zoe and Theodora in 1042, and the current seal is the earliest securely dated seal with this iconography.[288]

Images of Christ and the Virgin on Coins and Seals of Imperial Women[289]

Certain tendencies emerge from the above analysis. While empresses introduced several numismatic innovations — some of which had lasting effect on Byzantine coins,[290] others were less successful in affecting an immediate change in coin iconography —[291] the numismatic imagery used by empresses for the most part follows

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[285] See for example the seal of Eustathios, patriarch of Constaninople in 1019-1025, Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 75.
[286] Above the letter A after the word Maria is a small cross.
[287] Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 2682.
[288] See Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," who suggested that the earliest seal with this iconography belongs to Anna Dalassena (1067-1081); she provides a list of seals that carry this iconographic type of the Virgin, pp. 54.
[289] For a recent discussion of the Virgin on coins and seals in Byzantium, see Penna, "The Mother of God on Coins and Lead Seals."
[290] As for instance, the re-introduction of the bust image of Christ on the *solidi* of Theodora and Michael III.
[291] E.g. the introduction of the Virgin holding the medallion of Christ by Zoe and Constantine VII in the early tenth century, which, however was not employed widely on imperial coins until the last quarter of the tenth century; or the histamenon of Zoe and Theodora in 1042 that introduced the orans Virgin with the hovering medallion, which did not appear on coins again until the 1080s.

the established trends of coin imagery and hierarchy of iconography. Accordingly, after the introduction of the effigy of Christ and the Virgin into coins, empresses are typically associated with both on different denominations as customary.

Greater difference can be discerned in the employment of effigies of Christ and the Virgin on seals by emperors and empresses. As Cotsonis has observed, in his sample of 5877 Byzantine iconographic lead seals the Virgin appears on almost half of the specimens (on 45.8%) while only about 5% carry representations of Christ, and a vast majority of these (ca. 70%) belong to emperors.[292] He further drew attention to an important change in the use of the effigy of Christ on lead seals: while in the pre-iconoclastic period emperors never used the image of Christ, in the post-iconoclastic era it had become very closely, in fact almost exclusively associated with the emperor on seals.[293] The figure of Christ appears on the seals of three empresses: the regent Zoe Carbonopsina in 914-919, the independent ruler Theodora in 1055-56, and the regent Eudokia Makrembolitissa in 1067, while other surviving seals of empresses and imperial female relatives typically show images of the Virgin. Emperors, however, avoid depicting the Virgin on their seals in this period altogether. Thus the figure of Christ on seals appears to be specifically associated with the de facto exercise of imperial power, with executive authority. Empresses and female imperial family members do not associate themselves with one specific type of the Virgin on their seals, but appear to be partial to three iconographic types: the orans, the one holding a medallion of Christ in front of her chest, and the orans with the hovering medallion of Christ. These iconographic types also appear on coins with frequency in this period.

The orans Virgin[294] appears on the seals of three empresses, Anastasia/Theophano (second half of the tenth century), her granddaughter Zoe (1030s-50s), and Eudokia

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[292] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 141-142, 49.

[293] Cotsonis has shown, that an increase is noticeable between the ninth/tenth through the twelfth centuries in the employment of the image of Christ on imperial seals: in the ninth century 42.3% of seals decorated with the image of Christ belong to emperors, while in the period tenth-twelfth centuries 78.7% of seals bearing the image of Christ belong to emperors, see ibid., p. 143.

[294] Although it had already been used on seals occasionally in the pre-iconoclastic period, it gained popularity in the tenth and eleventh centuries on lead seals, as shown by ibid., pp. 86-89. The orans Virgin had been identified as Maria MP ΘV on the *solidus* of Leo VI, and as Blachernitissa on the two-third *milaresia* of Constantine IX and the purple-born Theodora. See Werner Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der

Makrembolitissa (1060s), it is stamped on the unique silver weight of the empress Theodora (1055-56), and is one of the principal iconographic types of the Virgin on coins. It appeared for the first time on coins on a small issue of Leo VI in the early tenth century, but only became established as a reoccurring type in the mid-eleventh century, when it was used continuously from the 1040s to the 1080s (and beyond) on the coins of Constantine IX (1042-55), Theodora (1055-56), Michael VI (1056-57), Constantine X (1059-67), Romanos IV (1068-71), Michael VII (1071-78), and Nikephoros Botaniates (1078-81).[295] Thus the Virgin orans was most popular on coins in the second half of the eleventh century in our period. Cotsonis observed, that most seals that carry the image of the orans Virgin date to the eleventh century, although on coins it remained in vogue in the twelfth century. Yet it is important to point out a disjuncture between the wide use of this iconography on coins and the relatively modest percentage of it among iconographic seals.[296] This marked difference between the use of the orans Virgin on coins and on private seals appears to indicate that this iconography was also closely associated with the imperial office (at least within the realm of official imagery) and therefore it did not enjoy particular popularity on non-imperial seals.

The coins of Constantine IX and Theodora identify the orans Virgin as Blachernitissa, indicating that the figure of the Virgin is intended to replicate a particular icon, presumably the one most closely identified with the Blachernai shrine in the mid-eleventh century.[297] There survives a processional cross at the Benaki Museum dated to

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Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," *Byzantina* 13 (1985): pp. 549-64, especially p. 559.

[295] The orans Virgin also appeared on the coins of Alexius I (1081-1118), John II (1118-43), Manuel (1143-80).

[296] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," p. 87.

[297] The church comprised of a basilica thought to have been built by the empress Pulcheria c. 450, a rotunda called the Hagia Soros allegedly erected twenty some years later by Leo I as the depository of the relic of the Virgin's robe, and a bathhouse with a miraculous spring. See Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , pp. 169-179 and George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), pp. 333-337, with further bibliography. Also see Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , pp. 534-542, for mentions of the Blachernai in the *Patria.* As a 1027 typikon attests, a fraternity was in charge of the bath at the Blachernai the eleventh century. Annemarie Weyl Carr, "The Mother of God in Public," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virign in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens, Milan: Benaki Museum, Skira, 2000), p. 330. The text of the typikon is found in Paris, BN, Coislin 213. Since the early sixth century the Blachernai was the starting point of a

the first half of the eleventh century that also represents the orans Virgin accompanied by the inscription Blachernitissa.[298] Some information is offered about the icons located at the Blachernai by the *Book of Ceremonies*, which gives an account of the imperial visits to the church and its baths, and makes reference to several icons: an icon of the Mother of God outside the *metatorikion* near a silver cross (inside the church proper?), a silver icon of the Mother of God at the fountain in the baths, a marble relief of a hand of the Mother of God in the baths, a "marble icon of the Mother of God which pours out holy water from her holy hands" in the chapel of St. Photeinos, and the Episkepsis, which has been identified as an icon, although the text does not say so.[299] A passage in the Patria (dated c. 980-990) also informs us about the renovation and redecoration of the Blachernai under the reign of Basil II: "The holy baths of the Blachernai renovated the younger Basil, the beautiful, generous, sympathetic son of the emperor Romanos the younger, the Porphyrogennetos. He rebuilt it as new, and decorated it [to be] more beautiful and better, than it had been before, and of much silver and gold he gave it both images and decoration."[300] Unfortunately, however, this passage does not provide specific information about the imagery that was installed or restored at this time, yet it indicates that one needs to be cautious in interpreting the evidence offered by the *Book of Ceremonies*, since the decoration changed a few decades after its composition.

Scholars have extensively debated the appearance of the numerous icons of the Blachernai mentioned in the *Ceremonial Book.* The appearance of the icon in the Photeinos chapel may be reconstructed with reasonable certainty based on the text and on parallel surviving marble images: it has been argued convincingly that it was a marble

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weekly procession that took place on Fridays and lead to the Chalkoprateia, another Marian church, see Nancy Patterson Sevcenko, "Icons in the Liturgy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): 45-57, p. 51.

[298] Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God* , no. 41.

[299] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , II, ch. 12, pp. 551-556, especially p. 555. For a translation of most of this chapter, see Belting, *Likeness and Presence* , pp. 510-511, also see his interpretation of the passage on p. 186. For a discussion of the term *episkepsis*, see Bissera V. Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," *RES. Journal for Anthropology and Aesthetics* 38 (2000): pp. 34-55, especially p. 36, n. 5.

[300] *Patria* III, 214, Theodor Preger, ed., *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (New York: 1975), p. 283. See Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , p. 542 for a German translation. Also see Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God* , p. 361.

relief icon of the orans Virgin whose perforated palms sprouted water.[301] Belting-Ihm proposed that the relief icon with the pierced palms copied the monumental mosaic of the Virgin orans in the main apse of the church at the Blachernai, and that it is this monumental mosaic icon that should be understood as the Blachernitissa image reproduced on eleventh century coins.[302] Grierson and Belting-Ihm hypothesized that the popularity of the orans Virgin on the coins of mid-eleventh century emperors may have been related to the 600th anniversary of the consecration of the Blachernai church, although no textual evidence for this celebration survives.[303] Belting-Ihm also drew attention to the popularity of the orans Virgin in monumental decorations of churches outside Constantinople, such as the Panagia ton Chalkeon in Salonika built by the governor and imperial official Christopher c. 1028, the Hagia Sophia in Kiev (c. 1042-46), and the church of Nea Moni on Chios founded by Constantine IX and completed by Theodora in 1056, all of which have close imperial connections, yet she was hesitant about seeing direct references to the Blachernai church in these decorations.[304] Robin Cormack suggested that royal associations were likely perceived in monumental decorations that contained representations of the orans Virgin because a connection to the Blachernai shrine closely linked with the imperial office and/or the church of the Virgin at the Pharos in the Great Palace that contained a ninth century image of an orans Virgin in the apse would have been recognized.[305] The convergence of the dated coins bearing

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[301] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," p. 88. For a recent discussion of relief icons of the Virgin orans, see Katia Loverdou-Tsigarida, "The Mother of God in Sculpture," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens Milan: Benaki Museum, Skira, 2000), 237-49.

[302] Christa Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* (Heidelberg: 1976), pp. 49-50, 52.

[303] Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 173, and Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , p. 53.

[304] "Whärend die Orans in den Apsiden auch in der Folge, dank der für die Ausmalung byzantinischer Kirchen geltenden Richtlinien, mehr oder weniger unabhängig von der Blachernenkirche gedeihen konnte, läßt sich das gleiche von den Oransikonen nicht sagen." Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , p. 54.

[305] Robin Cormack, "The Mother of God in Apse Mosaics," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens, Milan: Benaki Museum, Skira, 2000), 90-105, especially pp. 102-103. Photios' Homily X recounts the appearance of the mosaic of the Virgin at the Pharos inaugurated c. 864: "The apse which rises over the sanctuary glistens with the image of the Virgin, stretching out her stainless arms on our behalf and winning for the emperor safety and exploits against the

the inscription Blachernitissa in the 1040s and 1050s with monumental decorations depicting the Virgin orans in clearly dated monuments from the late 1020s to the mid 1050s in churches with direct imperial associations argue compellingly that the figure of the orans Virgin on coins and seals of the eleventh century was used to evoke the famous image of the main apse at the church of the Blachernai underscoring the importance of imperial devotion at this shrine.

The Virgin holding the medallion of Christ over her chest (a type frequently referred to as Nikopoios in the scholarship)[306] was used on the seal of a late ninth or early tenth century imperial female relative, a certain Maria. Approximately in the same period, this iconography appeared on the pattern coin of Zoe Carbonopsina in 914-919. This iconography was somewhat more popular than the pervious type on lead seals; it appeared on 12% of Marian seals, and is found in greatest numbers in the ninth and tenth centuries. The seal of Maria and the pattern coin of Zoe reflect an image choice that in the late eighth and throughout the ninth century was most closely identified with the secular clergy.[307] Perhaps this association, and by the same token a lack of strong, widely publicized imperial connection with this iconography in the early tenth century explains why Zoe's coin was not minted after all. Only later, with the *milaresion* of Basil II in the last quarter of the tenth century did this iconography become part of the numismatic vocabulary.[308] Several rulers following Basil II employed this type: Romanos III (1028-34), Eudokia and Constantine (1067), Romanos IV (1067-71), Michael VII (1071-78). Thus another disjuncture may be noted here between numismatic and sphragistic imagery: while on non-imperial seals this iconography was most popular in the second

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foes." Translated in Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 188.

[306] Imperial seals only used this iconography once in the pre-iconoclastic period. Several seals survive from the mid to late eleventh century, which identify this type of image of the Virgin as the Nikopoios. See Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 81-86.

[307] Cotsonis found that in the late eighth and early ninth century the surviving seals with this iconography belong to the secular clergy, while in the ninth century about 75% of them belong to the secular clergy. These ratios change in the tenth-eleventh centuries, when it is used by laity and secular clergy in equal proportions, see ibid. , p. 86.

[308] Seibt suggested that these milaresia date to 1030-1042 and commemorate the adoption of Michael V by Zoe, see Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," , pp. 552-553, however, his interpretation does not seem convincing, as has been pointed out by Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 84 and Carr, "The Mother of God in Public," p. 335, n. 15.

half of the ninth and in the tenth centuries, on coins it came to vogue later, in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, thus imperial association with this image type and its exploitation followed a popular earlier trend rather than initiated it.[309]

It has been suggested that the coin iconography of the Virgin holding the Christ child in a medallion in front of her chest is related to an icon that Skylizes described in connection with the Blachernai in the late eleventh century.[310]

> While renovating the sanctuary of the Blachernai, he [the emperor Romanos III Argyros, (1028-1034)] discovered an old icon hung [on the wall], which he ordered to be renewed. Seeing that the plaster of the wall was bulging, he ordered it to be demolished. By demolishing the plaster, an icon painted on wood was discovered: a wood-panel of the Theotokos carrying our Lord and God in front of her chest (σανίδιον επιστήθιον κρατούσης της θεοτοκου). It has remained intact from the times of Kopronymos; three hundred years have passed until the present day.[311]

Scholars disagree whether one or two icons were found on this occasion; Mango, Seibt, Schulz maintain that it was only one image, while Pentcheva argued that two icons were found.[312] Janin suggested that the icon depicted the orans Virgin with the Christ child hovering in a medallion on her chest — not a likely suggestion since the text expressly describes the Virgin as holding her son — while Seibt, Belting-Ihm, Schulz, and Pentcheva were of the opinion that the icon showed the Virgin holding the Christ child in a medallion on her chest. Cotsonis, however, argued that the iconography of the icon

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[309] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 85-86.

[310] Wortley put the likely date of composition of Skylitzes's chronicle to the 1080s, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)* , p. v.

[311] For translation of the passage, see, Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," p. 46. A different translation is offered by Wortley in Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)* , pp. 205-206. For an interpretation of the passage, also see E. Trapp, "Eine wideraufgefundene Ikone der Blachernenkirche," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 35 (1985), pp. 193-195; Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," pp. 551-552; Martin Schulz, "Die Nicopea in San Marco. Zur Geschichte und zum Typ einer Ikone," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91 (1998): pp. 475-501, Pl. X-XVI, especially pp. 495- 500.

[312] Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," , p. 551-552; Schulz, "Die Nicopea in San Marco. Zur Geschichte und zum Typ einer Ikone," , pp. 497-498; Cyril Mango, "The Chalkoprateia Annunciation and the Preeternal Logos," *Christianikes Archaiologikes Hetaireias* 17/4 (1993-1994): pp. 165-70; Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," p. 46. Belting-Ihm suggested that the icon discovered by Romanos III was identical with the icon described in the *Life of Stephen the Younger*, PG 100, 1076, p. 508, see Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , p. 51.

could not be established with certainty beyond the fact that it represented the Virgin holding the Christ child, and thus it could belong to any of three iconographic types: the Virgin holding the medallion of Christ, the Hodegetria, and the Virgin with the Christ child on her chest where she does not hold him.[313] Cotsonis appears to favor the Hodegetria since it was a particularly popular type on seals in the eighth century, the date of the concealment of the original icon. However, the period of alleged concealment is hardly a secure tool of dating the icon to the eighth century. Moreover, one may object to Cotsonis's argument based on the actual wording of the text, since it specifically states that the Virgin held up or supported Christ on her chest as also noted by Seibt, which is not the case with the Hodegetria, where the child is seated on the Virgin's arm usually off to the side. The other iconographic type, which Cotsonis designates the "Virgin with Christ on her breast" is not represented holding the Christ child as stated in the text, and further, is not particularly popular in the pre or post-Iconoclastic period in other media, so it does not seem likely that it would have been the iconographic type of the icon allegedly found by Romanos III.[314] Therefore, on the icon rediscovered by Romanos III the Virgin most likely appeared holding Christ, either inside a medallion or simply in her hands, in front of her breast, as shown for instance on the apse mosaic of the Church of the Dormition at Nicaea or on a ceramic revetment plaque from the tenth or eleventh century.[315] Scholars have not remarked on the fact that the report about the discovery of the icon by Romanos III comes from a source that is ca. 60 years later than the events it reports. Psellos, a contemporary of Romanos III, has not reported about the finding of this icon, although he has given an extensive description of Romanos' building activities involving the monastery of the Virgin Peribleptos, and has also shown interest in recording other icons as for instance the miraculous icon of Christ Antiphonites belonging to the empress Zoe. Psellos's also left an account of the usual miracle dated to

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[313] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , p. 169. Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , pp. 51-52; Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," , p. 559; Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," ; Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," p. 85.

[314] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," p. 67.

[315] For the now destroyed mosaic of Nicaea and the ceramic plaque, see Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God* , p. 96, fig. 50, and p. 358, no. 39.

1075, a regularly occurring miraculous event involving an icon of the Virgin at the Blachernai attested from the late eleventh century, which will be discussed in more detail below. It is therefore possible, that Skylitzes' report of the discovery of the icon by Romanos III should not be taken at face value, and that he reported a story whose aim was to provide an icon at the Blachernai with a prestigious pedigree leading all the way back to the eighth century. The story may have been used as a tool of persuasion about the authenticity of the icon necessitated by the destruction of the Blachernai church in the fire of 1069. It may have been imperative after 1069 to propagate the notion that the icons of the newly restored church had a long, established history.

The Virgin with the hovering medallion over her chest appears only on one coin issue of the period minted by Zoe and Theodora in 1042, although it is used later in the tweflth century on the coins of three emperors, Alexius I, Andronikos, and Manuel I.[316] This coin type visually linked the sisters with the coinage of their uncle, Basil II, from whose *milaresia* the representation of the Virgin was taken with one significant change: the position of the arms were altered. One empress, Eudokia Makrembolitissa and one female imperial relative of the mid-eleventh century employed this iconography on their seals. Despite its rarity on coins, this imagery became extremely popular on seals in the period 1050-1200, after which its use declined sharply. Cotsonis found that 23% of all Marian seals are decorated with this iconography (by far the largest number), and it comprised about a quarter of Marian seals in the eleventh century, and almost half of Marian seals in the twelfth century. He also suggested that the popularity of this iconography on non-imperial seals must reflect imperial cult that took place at the Blachernai.[317] It is significant to note, that this iconographic type of the Virgin does not

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[316] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," pp. 89-93; Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai." This iconography has been associated with a series of epithets, as surveyed most recently by Bissera Pentcheva ibid., p. 37, such as the Blachernitissa and Panagiotissa, each attested on one seal of the late eleventh century, Episkepsis that appears in the thirteenth century, Znamenie popular in the fifteenth century, and Platytera used from the seventeenth century. For a discussion of the epithet Episkepsis on seals of, see Herbert Hunger, "Heimsuchung und Schirmherrschaft über Welt und Menschheit," *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 4 (1995): pp. 33-42.

[317] Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals," p. 89, where he gives the number as 625 (which is 23% of all Marian seals he collected, that numbered 2690; for the number of Marian seals Cotsonis collected, see ibid p. 49.) Pentcheva also carried out a statistical

survive in other media until the twelfth century with the exception of a Cypriot icon that may date prior to the introduction of this image type on the coins of Zoe and Theodora in the mid-eleventh century.[318]

Similarly to the pervious two iconographic types, the image of the Virgin with the hovering medallion has also been linked with the Blachernai shrine in the scholarship. Ebersolt suggested that the Episkepsis mentioned in the *Book of Ceremonies* was an icon that showed the Virgin ornas with the Christ child hovering on her chest, a view Grierson and Belting-Ihm also shared based on the evidence of a thirteenth century seal that combines this iconography with the legend Episkepsis.[319] Janine argued that the Episkepsis was an icon of the Virgin orans, still others emphasized that the identification of the iconographic type of what is referred to as Episkepsis in the *Book of Ceremonies* is not possible.[320] Belting suggested, following the conclusions of Ihm, that the Episkepsis may have derived its name from the miraculous visits of the Mother of God performed during the so-called usual miracle, a plausible suggestion, yet one needs to keep in mind that the evidence for the performance of the usual miracle comes from ca. 1075 or later, thus more than two centuries after the composition of the *Ceremonial Book.*[321] There is, however, a description of a miraculous vision at the Blachernai reported in the *Life of St. Andrew the Fool,* a hagiography variously dated to the seventh and tenth centuries, which also attests to belief that the Virgin visited her sanctuary and made her presence

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analysis of Marian seals, although her sample was smaller than that of Cotsonis, see Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," pp. 54-55.

[318] See S. Sophocleous, *Icons from Cyprus, 7-20th Century* (Nicosia: 1994), fig. 2, pp. 76, 123. This icon has been dated to the eighth-ninth centuries, although Pentcheva has pointed out that it must date after 843, see Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," , p. 37, no. 12.

[319] Jean Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance. Recherses sur les anciens trésors des églises de Constantinople* (Paris: 1921), pp. 50-51, and figs. 7 and 8 for a reproduction of the seal. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , p. 173; Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , p. 52.

[320] Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , p. 174. On the difficulties of identifying the iconographic type of the Episkepsis, see L. Rydén, "The Vision of the Virgin at the Blachernae and the Feast of Pokrov," *Analecta Bollandiana* 94 (1976): pp. 63-82, especially p. 70; Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," pp. 36-37. Grumel, on the other hand, argued that the Episkepsis was a reliquary, see V. Grumel, "Notes d'histoire et de littèrature byzantines, I, Sur l'Episkepsis des Blachernes," *Échoes d'Orient* 29 (1930): pp. 334-36.

[321] Belting, *Likeness and Presence* , p. 186 and Belting-Ihm, *'Sub matris tutela.' Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna* , pp. 54-55, 58-59. For the usual miracle, V. Grumel, "Le 'miracle habituel' de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople," *Échos d'Orient* 30 (1931): pp. 129-46.

visible.[322] St. Andrew witnessed as the Virgin accompanied by an extensive holy entourage arrived to the sanctuary to pray, and

> Having finished her prayer she went into the sanctuary, praying there for the people standing around. When she had prayed, with her beautiful dignity she removed her veil, which appeared like a flash of lightning, from her wholly immaculate head and took it – it was large and awe-inspiring – in her wholly immaculate hand and spread it over all the people standing there. For a long while the admirable men saw it stretched out over the people, radiating the glory of the Lord like amber. As long as the Holy Mother of God was there the veil was also visible, but when she had withdrawn they could no longer see it. No doubt she had taken it away with her, but her favor she left to those who were there.[323]

It is clear from this narrative that the miracle witnessed by Andrew was not one that occurred regularly, yet the description of Andrew's vision has common elements with the description of the usual miracle given by Psellos in the late eleventh century, thus it is likely that miraculous apparitions, like the one experienced by Andrew formed the kernel of the later 'practice' of the usual miracle. It is however not clear whether the vision of Andrew was actually inspired by an icon in the church, for no reference is made to an icon, or by knowledge of the presence of the relic of the Virgin's robe there and the stories circulating about the actions and saving power of the robe during times of need.[324] Although this hagiography does not use the term Episkepsis to refer to the miracle witnessed by Andrew at the Blachernai, the same text employs the term in connection with another church, the Myrelaion, where it seems to refer to a miracle-working icon.[325] No certain conclusions can be drawn about the appearance of the Episkepsis referred to in the *Book of Ceremonies* based on the above evidence, however, it seems likely that the term refers to the miraculous quality of an image of the Virgin, that it is perceived to become animated through the presence of the Mother of God.

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[322] Mango dated the text to the seventh century, and Rydén proposed a date in the 960s, see Lennart Rydén, *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 4* (Uppsala: 1995).

[323] Ibid. , p. 255.

[324] See for instance Photios' description of the Russian siege of Constantinople in 860 when the Virgin's robe is reported to have covered the whole city to protect it, Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* , p. 102.

[325] For the reference to the Myrelaion, see PG 111, 721A; and Rydén, "The Vision of the Virgin at the Blachernae and the Feast of Pokrov," , p. 70, no. 2.

One particular icon emerged as the focal point of the cult at the Blachernai in the last quarter of the eleventh century, the icon of the 'usual miracle', which has been identified with an icon that shows the Virgin with the hovering medallion of Christ over her chest. Two texts, one from the historian Michael Psellos and the other from a Latin pilgrim, both dating to c. 1075 describe the so-called usual miracle involving an icon of the Virgin at the Blachernai. Psellos reports:

> And as they enter in a mixture of fear and joy, the veil (peplos) on the icon lifts itself up in front of the crowds, as if raised by the Spirit. ... Together with this occurrence, the shape of the Virgin changes, and I believe, having received her [the Virgin's] animated empsychos visit (epidemian), marking the invisible with the visible. On the one hand, with respect to her Son and God hanging from the cross the temple curtain is torn apart in order to reveal to us the truth hidden by the symbols, or to summon the believers inside the innermost sanctuary, or to destroy the walls separating us from the intimacy with our God. On the other hand, with respect to the Mother of God, the holy cloth (hieros peplos) mysteriously lifts itself up so that she would embrace inside her the entering crowd as if in a new sanctuary and inviolate refuge.[326]

Psellos' text indicates that an image of the Virgin changes its shape as a result of the personal presence of the Virgin, however, provides no reference to the appearance of the image. The Latin pilgrim added further details:

> In the small one [the rotunda] there is the holy and venerable gold icon of the Theotokos, holding the Son (gestantis filium) whom she was blessed to bear. In connection with this icon a famous miracle happens every week. ... This holy icon of the Theotokos is covered from the waist down by a veil attached on either side by two nails. Thus half the icon is visible from the waist up, i.e. the bosom and the head. The other half is concealed from the waist down, covered, as I have said by a silken veil. On the sixth day [Friday] around sunset, as many people as possible gather at the aforementioned church, men and women, and also clergy and priests. ... While the clergy is singing and the people are praying, the veil (pallium) that covers half of the icon lifts up by the grace of God, showing the half of the image it had concealed before.[327]

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[326] X. A. Sideridis, "Michael Psellos: Logos epi to en Blachernais gegonoti thaumati (ex. Cod. Vatic. Graec. 672," *Orthodoxia* 28 (1928): pp. 514ff, translated in Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," p. 46. Schulz suggested that the icon of the usual miracle was identical with the icon described in the *Life of St. Stephen the Younger* 92.8-13, see Schulz, "Die Nicopea in San Marco. Zur Geschichte und zum Typ einer Ikone," p. 496.

[327] Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," , p. 47. From K. Cigaar, "Une description de Constantinople dans le Tarragonensis 55," *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 53 (1995): pp. 117-40, especially pp. 121-122.

Seibt proposed that the icon that took part in the usual miracle was an icon of the Virgin that depicted her orans figure with the Christ child hovering on her chest in a medallion.[328] Elaborating on this view, Pentcheva suggested that during this miracle a bust image of the Virgin holding a medallion of Christ, probably a copy of the one found during the reign of Romanos III, was transformed into an image of the standing orans Virgin with the medallion of Christ hovering on her chest.[329] Suggesting that the Latin pilgrim was incorrect in his description of the veil covering the icon, Pentcheva argued that the icon was completely covered by a silk hanging attached at the top showing a bust image of the Virgin holding Christ in a clypeus, and this cloth was then rolled up by a contraption of some kind to display the larger, full-length image underneath it with the orans Virgin with the miraculously hovering medallion.[330] Pentcheva's argument ingeniously brings together two important iconographic types that have been associated with the Blachernai in the scholarship, and offers an interpretation for the suddenly emerging popularity of the Virgin with the hovering medallion of Christ on lead seals in the Komnenian period.

But is it justifiable to postulate that two images participated in the usual miracle rather than one? Neither Psellos nor the Latin pilgrim suggests so. The Latin pilgrim states that the Virgin carried her son, and is emphatic in recounting that the image was only partly covered. Pentcheva's arguments regarding the covering of the icon are based on typical icon covers, as the one depicted in the Hamilton Psalter, however, one wonders if this is justified. While there is evidence about other miraculous icon covers, as for instance the one that was hung in front of the image of Christ Chalkites that is attested to have preformed healing miracles, the Blachernai icon cover is unique in its ability to

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[328] Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," p. 561.

[329] Grumel also suggested that the icon found by Romanos III probably was identical with the icon of the usual miracle, see Grumel, "Le 'miracle habituel' de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople," p. 144f; this view was also shared by Schulz, "Die Nicopea in San Marco. Zur Geschichte und zum Typ einer Ikone," p. 498.

[330] Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," , p. 48. For a discussion of icon covers, see Valerie Nunn, "The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 10 (1986): pp. 73-102.

elevate itself up.[331] Moreover, it is also unique because it is found in a church that contains the relic of the Virgin's robe that has been known to spread out and perform miracles. It is without a doubt that the usual miracle is a dramatic institutionalization of the protective power of the relic of the Virgin's robe, and therefore the icon cover that participated in the usual miracle functioned in two ways: both as a protective cover for an icon and as an embodiment, or extension of the Virgin's robe. Furthermore, because Psellos uses a reference to the temple curtain being torn apart, an event associated with the crucifixion of Christ,[332] the text creates the impression that the covering of the icon was first parted in the middle and then was lifted up. The parting and lifting up of the two sides of the veil covering the icon could then be also linked with the earlier miracles reported at the Blachernai and the vision of the robe of the Virgin, the primary relic of the church, extended over the community. The icon in its covered state most likely showed the upper body of the Virgin either holding the Christ child in front of her bosom or, more likely simply bearing him in a medallion hovering on her chest and in the course of the miracle the full figure of the Virgin became visible with the icon cover spread out around the image like a canopy.

It appears significant that the reports about the usual miracle begin to surface after the church had burned down and been rebuilt in the 1070s. Staging such a miracle may have been designed to pre-empt doubts about the continued presence and efficacy of the Virgin's relic deposited at the church and instill confidence about her ever present favor.[333] There is however, a chronological gap between the first appearance of this iconography on imperial coins and seals, and the reports about the usual miracle. These considerations make it unlikely that the image introduced into the coinage of Zoe and Theodora, which also appeared on the seal of an imperial female relative and of Eudokia Makrembolitissa, was derived from an icon at the Blachernai church in the mid-eleventh century. More likely it was an icon that was set up in one of the palace churches in the

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[331] For the healing miracles, see Nunn, "The Encheirion as Adjunct to the Icon in the Middle Byzantine Period," , pp. 84-85.
[332] Mark 15:38.
[333] Seibt proposed that the ancient icon re-discovered by Romanos III survived the fire, see Seibt, "Der Bildtypus der Theotokos Nikopoios. Zur Ikonographie der Gottesmutter-Ikone, die 1030/31 in der Blachernenkirche wiederaufgefunden wurde," p. 554.

eleventh century, since the imperial sisters associated their independent rule with this image. That the icon may have had a direct personal relevance for the empresses is supported by the fact that Zoe minted coins with the representation of Christ Antiphonites of whose icon she possessed and to whom she felt a strong personal devotion.[334] In the course of the restoration of the Blachernai c. 1070, perhaps this icon was moved or replicated and placed into the church.

Conclusion

The appearance of imperial women on Middle Byzantine coins does not constitute the norm, although eleven empresses appeared on the currency between 780 and 1081. These empresses belong to four categories: 1) regent mothers of infant or adolescent sons (Irene the Athenian, Theodora the Iconophile, Zoe Carbonopsina, and Eudokia Makrembolitissa); 2) wives of emperors who had given birth to imperial offspring (Theodora the Iconophile, Eudokia Ingerina, Eudokia Makrembolitissa, and Maria of Alania); 3) imperial daughters (the sisters Thekla, Anna, Anastasia); and 4) independent rulers (Irene the Athenian, the purple-born Zoe and Theodora). Several of these empresses were of imperial blood: Thekla, Anna, Anastasia, and the purple-born Zoe and Theodora. Imperial women appear on the coins sporadically for most of the period; Irene was present on the coinage for over two decades at the beginning of the era (780-802), and they appeared with great frequency on coins in the last four decades of the period (Zoe and Theodora 1041-42, Theodora 1055-56, Eudokia Makrembolitissa 1059-71, Maria of Alania 1071-81), yet otherwise empresses were seen only for short periods from the ninth through the mid-eleventh centuries. Theophilos's family coin of the 830s presented his wife and three of his daughters, and Basil's family coins struck c. 867 included his wife, yet both of these issues were minted in limited numbers most likely for ceremonial distribution. Otherwise, it was only for about fifteen years in the middle of the ninth century that Theodora and her daughter Thekla appeared on the coins with regularity in 843-856, and later Zoe Carbonopsina was present on the coins for ca. five

[334] For Zoe's devotion to an icon of Christ Antiphonites, see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book 6, 66-70, pp. 188-189.

years in the early tenth century (914-919). Even when one postulates that coins circulated longer than their years of issue, for more than half of the period no empresses were visible on the currency of the empire; decades, and on one occasion more than a century went by without women appearing on coins.

The figure of the empress was evidently not considered a necessary element of official numismatic iconography when able bodied, mature emperors set on the throne. Coins were rarely struck in the names of empresses in the Middle Byzantine period; only Irene the Athenian and Theodora Porphyrogenneta had coins issued in their name when they reigned as sole rulers, on which they appeared without imperial colleagues. To these may be added the rare copper coins of Zoe Porphyrogenneta, however, these do not appear to have circulated widely. When effigies of empresses do appear on coins they usually are shown together with their colleagues, who may be placed next to them, or on the other side of the coin; more often then not, they appear side by side with their colleagues on the same face of the coin. Unlike in the early Byzantine empire, when independent coins of empresses were regularly issued along the coins of emperors to articulate different aspects of a complex imperial message, in the middle Byzantine period coins communicated a much narrower imperial message through a limited visual vocabulary, and effigies of empresses were used less frequently and only when the political circumstances dictated so. Coins, as the most widely available imperial public images articulate fundamental notions about power and power relationships in Byzantium, such as the distribution of power, the lines of succession, and the sources of imperial power from earthly predecessors and divine forces. However, images on coins do not always reveal the actual circumstances of the possession and exercise of imperial power.[335] Rather, they themselves can be instrumental in constructing a vision of the ideal or desirable state of imperial power,[336] and can testify to the possession of a unique, charismatic, symbolic authority bestowed by god upon the figures who appear on

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[335] For instance, non-imperial members of regency councils never appear on coins, while imperial children are frequently shown on the currency even if they are only infants.

[336] See Simon Price's observations about how Roman imperial imagery functions: "imperial images do not only reflect but also constitute imperial ideology," Simon R. F. Price, *Rituals of Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 205.

imperial coins. Although empress consorts acquired a symbolic authority[337] as spouses or daughters of emperors, and this symbolic authority on occasion translated into the actual exercise of imperial power, empresses were not vested with the *imperium*. Even though the empress partakes in a symbolic imperial authority because of her association with the emperor, as indicated by the acclamations she receives at her coronation and other imperial ceremonials,[338] her authority was presented publicly in coin images as active, executive power only at times of crisis. The relative rarity of the presence of imperial women on coins underscores their absolute importance when they do appear on the currency, yet as a deviation from the norm, it also signals political turmoil from the vantage point of the modern historian. Ten of the eleven empresses who appear on the coins were placed there because of a crisis in dynastic succession.[339] Thus the political role of the empress emerges from the friction between the ideology of the elective nature of imperial power and the practice of dynastic succession. On coins, the figure of the empress serves as a 'stop gap' measure: she is an embodiment of an historical hiatus of male power, or conversely an embodiment of continuity between male generations. The question arises: was the appearance of empresses on coins perceived as a sing of crisis by contemporaries, and did this actually undermine or subvert the empress's power and authority or that of the emperor with whom she was associated? If the presence of empresses on coins is equated with a crisis in exercising imperial power or with a political vacuum, does that change the message of these coins? Is this even a

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[337] With the term symbolic authority I mean to emphasize a potential for imperial power in contradistinction to the actual exercise of the imperial power. It is of course unclear to what degree empresses exercised imperial power during the lifetime of their spouses; but if imperial power is defined as a public exercise of the ruler's authority in matters of the state, then most empresses are presented in contemporary sources as having been excluded from this arena during the lifetime of their emperor husbands. Yet despite their exclusion, empresses possessed other types of power in the form of influence and charismatic authority. For a discussion of power and its various forms with regard to the Byzantine empress, see James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* , pp. 4-7.

[338] See Chapter I.

[339] One empress, Eudokia Ingerina, however, was presented on the coins of her husband Basil I, for different reasons – her appearance on the currency helped to inaugurate a new imperial dynasty, and it also bestowed power on Eudokia herself as the imperial mother of the new line. (This may have been necessitated by Eudokia's pre-history in the imperial court, and the rumors that circulated about her role in the demise of the previous emperor and the ascent of her husband.) While Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Maria of Alania were placed on the coins after the deaths of their first husbands because of a dynastic crisis, they also appeared on the coins of their first husbands for reasons similar to the appearance of Eudokia Ingerina — after the demise of the Macedonian dynasty, Constantine X and Michael VII stood at the beginning of a new imperial line.

relevant question to ask in a society where the contestation of imperial power was constant, regardless of whether a male or female ruler sat on the throne?[340] While the appearance of empresses on coins may have emerged from a series of dynastic crises and moments of political vacuum at the apex of society, there are other important ideological trends that need to be considered, such as iconophile orthodoxy, the legal standing of widows, and the cumulative effect of tradition, when the imagery is analyzed.

The first empress to place her effigy on coins in the period, Irene the Athenian, appears to have been highly aware of the possibly subversive nature of her own image on the imperial currency. Thus, she elected to place five imperial effigies on the first issue minted after the death of her husband that included herself, her son, her husband, his father and grandfather – clearly an attempt to cast her own position as simply a link in a chain of imperial succession emphatically connecting the past and the future. During her sole reign she chose to depict only herself on the coins, a radical step born out of necessity, yet by this time the Byzantine public was accustomed to seeing her effigy on the currency, and she also had accomplishments in her own right that legitimized her position, most notably the restoration of icons in 787. Irene's two decades of exercise of imperial power, her ability to temporarily defeat iconoclasm, and her continuous presence on the coins between 780-802 established the precedent of an accomplished female ruler in Byzantium and furnished the next empress, Theodora, with a prototype to follow. Irene's coins contain no direct references to her iconophile policy, yet textual sources uniformly attest to her presence in the collective memory of Byzantine society as a champion of orthodoxy. Theodora molded her image based on her illustrious predecessor, Irene, but Theodora's coinage diverged in that it made visually manifest her iconophile policy by reintroducing the image of Christ onto Byzantine coins. The restoration of icons provided legitimization for the rules of both Irene and Theodora, and

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[340] Cheynet lists c. 60 attempts to eliminate the ruling emperor between 963 and 1081, see Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*, vol. 9, *Byzantina Sorboniensia* (Paris: Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Civilisation Byzantines, 1990). To these may be added further examples from the previous period: Leo IV experienced a conspiracy against him in 776 by his half brothers; ten conspiracies were plotted during Irene's regency and sole rule including her elimination by Constantine and her blinding of Constantine; Nikephoros I came to the throne as a usurper, and there was a plot against him in 803; moreover, Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II were all usurpers, as were Basil I, Romanos Lekapenos, Niekphoros Phokas, and John Tzimiskes.

offered a discourse in which female power could be articulated in a positive light in the otherwise misogynistic world of Byzantium.[341] While it is unlikely that women had a greater proclivity for the veneration of icons, it is clear that both Irene and Theodora were skilled enough politicians to realize that the one and only source of legitimization of their rules rested with the restoration of images.[342] Theodora undoubtedly followed the prototype of Irene, for it is possible to detect echoes of Irene's activity in Theodora's undertakings, which surely must have been recognized by contemporaries. Furthermore, there is a direct female family line leading from Irene to Theodora attested by the sources: Irene's granddaughter, Euphrosyne was the grandmother of Theodora's children, and she instructed Theodora and her children in the worship of icons.[343] Whether fact, or propaganda, the importance of the unbroken tradition of icon worship by female members of the imperial family became a central notion of iconophile imperial ideology. Through the prominence of these two empresses the ideology of orthodoxy gained a

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[341] For the generally negative rhetoric of Byzantine historians about empresses who exercised their power, see the discussions of McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 107-120, and Pauline Allen, "Contemporary Portrayals of the Byzantine Empress Theodora (A.D. 527-548)," in *Stereotypes of Women in Power. Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, ed. Barbara Garlick, Suzanne Dixon, and Pauline Allen, *Contributions in Women's Studies 125* (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 93-103, with regard to the presentations of the empress Theodora of the sixth century.

[342] Judith Herrin argued that icon worship became a form of piety particularly favored by Byzantine women due to the fact that women were marginalized in the official liturgy of the orthodox church by the end of the seventh century rendering them silent observes rather than active participants, given that virtually no official positions were available to women in the ecclesiastical hierarchy from this period on, see Judith Herrin, "Public and Private Forms of Religious Commitment among Byzantine Women," in *Women in Ancient Societies.*, ed. Léonie J. Archer, Susan Fischler, and Maria Wyke (Hampshire and London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1994), pp. 181-203 and Judith Herrin, "Women and the Faith in Icons in Early Christianity," in *Culture, Ideology and Politics*, ed. R. Samuel and G. Stedman Jones (London: 1982), pp. 56-83. Robin Cormack, however, challenged Herrin's interpretation of the close connection between iconophile orthodoxy and women, and argued that the active involvement of Irene and Theodora in the restoration of images has been overstated. He believes that the victory of the iconophile cause should not be attributed to empresses, but rather to a power vacuum present during their regencies that allowed the influence of clerics and court officials to become manifest in restoring images, see Robin Cormack, "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 24-51. Cormack does not consider and analyze other possibilities. Fewer avenues were open to empresses to firmly establish the legitimacy of their power simply because the definition of imperial authority in Byzantium included and highly prized military authority that was not available to women. Cast in this light, it is perhaps possible to understand the restoration of icons in 787 and 843 as initiated by Irene and Theodora in order to legitimize their imperial power.

[343] This connection is explored in Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001).

female countenance and this quality perhaps saved representations of women on coins from subverting their own functions.

A further factor that justifies the appearance of empresses on imperial coinage is derived from the legal status of widows in Byzantium. Widowhood offered the most emancipated form of existence for Byzantine women although, understandably, it was also perceived as a state of great misfortune. A widow came to the full ownership of her estate, became the head of her household responsible for family property, as well as the education and marriage of her children. The Ecloga sates, a widow

> shall control her marriage portion and all her husband's property as becomes the head of the family household.... And the children shall not take her place or claim from her patrimony, but treat her with all obedience and honor according to God's command, ... she on her part as befits a parent being bound to educate and provide for their marriage and dower portion as she may determine.[344]

While the position of the empress as widow is not addressed in law codes undoubtedly the legal protection enjoyed by widows surrounded the empress and in this capacity she became the head of the imperial family although often a whole council of regents was appointed to safeguard the interests of under-aged imperial heirs.[345] Moreover, the legal position of widows provided a well-known and accepted social model through which the position of the dowager empress may be presented to and understood by the public at large and it is through the stable, easily recognizable, and traditional imagery of the widowed mother accompanying her son that the power relationships may be visualized. Thus these images concealed much of the complicated arrangements through which imperial power was exercised in the absence of a senior emperor and presented the power structure of the empire in the well-known idiom of the widowed mother protecting the interests of her child.

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[344] Ecloga II, 6 and Ecloga Privata Aucta II, 6; for English translation see Edwin Hanson Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman Law, The Ecloga* (Cambridge: 1926), pp. 74-75 and Freshfield, *A Manual of Roman Law, The Ecloga* , pp. 28-29. For the Greek text of the Ecloga with a German translation, see Ludwig Burgmann, *Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III und Konstantinos' V*, ed. Dieter Simon, *Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Frankfurt: 1983), pp. 174-175. Also see Buckler, "Women in Byzantine Law about 1100 A.D.," , pp. 406-410.

[345] On regency, see ODB III, pp. 1779, and Christophilopoulou, "He antibasileia eis to Byzantion."

Although representations of empresses did not become a normal occurrence on Byzantine coinage of the eight-eleventh centuries, the occasional presence of empresses on coins provided precedent on which successive empresses could draw on. A greater visibility of empresses on coins and in public life may be noted in the first half of the eleventh century created by the sisters Zoe and Theodora, who acquired unprecedented importance as the last members of the long-lasting but exhausted Macedonian dynasty. The cumulative effect of precedents characterizes the eleventh century, when several empresses appear on coins closely following one another and relying on the prototypes established by their immediate or not too distant predecessors creating a brief resurgence of the female imperial image on Byzantine coinage.

Irene forged the numismatic and sphragistic representation of empresses of the eight through the eleventh centuries, for no coin effigies of were available of her immediate female predecessors to draw on. Irene established a new iconography for the representation of empresses on coins and seals by reintroducing the independent bust image that was popular in the fourth and fifth centuries, although now the busts are shown frontally following the current style of imperial coin imagery, and she also employed the *loros* as the distinctive costume of imperial women in images, only rarely used by empresses before.[346] Irene's coins set the trend for the numismatic representations of middle Byzantine empresses. Theodora followed Irene's representations closely on some of her coins and seals but also embellished the visual formula initiated by Irene with a greater emphasis on the regalia and a more naturalistic

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[346] Irene's coins share some visual similarities with the coins of the fifth century empress Licinia Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius II and wife of Valentinian III, who on some of her coins minted in the West appeared with a frontal rather than the typical profile bust and on occasion was also shown in the *loros*. The coins minted in Rome in particular share several features with Irene's effigies: the frontal bust clad in the loros, the double pendilia, and the two triangular projections of the headdress. Nevertheless, a direct connection between the two imageries is hard to establish, since the coins that show Eudoxia with frontal busts or wearing the *loros* were minted in Rome and Ravenna but not in Constantinople. See Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs* , pp. 102-103 and Pl. 24/3-6; Grierson and Mays, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , no. 870. There is a gold medallion attributed to Eudoxia in Paris, Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , pp. 127-128, no. 77, which shows the empress with a frontal bust nearly identical with her coins issued in Rome in the middle of a circular pendant surrounded by a rich ornamental enamel border. While it is possible that this pieces was produced in Constantinople, it has also been suggested that it may date to anywhere between the fifth-seventh centuries. For a discussion of the technique of the Paris medallion, see David Buckton, "Byzantine Enamel and the West," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 13 (1988): pp. 235-59, especially pp. 236-237.

rendering of the human body on the first gold issue of her reign. Eudokia Ingerina followed closely in the more abstract tradition established by Irene and followed by Theodora on her seals and second gold issue, which style was also continued on the early pattern coins of Eudokia's daughter-in-law, Zoe Carbonopsina. Zoe, however, renewed the imagery with a more glamorous and naturalistic representation that introduced a new *loros* design and a larger crown, and on some of her issues she appeared in the *chlamys* rather than the *loros*. The new naturalistic style of Zoe's coins and seals follows in the footsteps of a new aesthetic heralded by the rare but exceptionally naturalistic coins of her husband, Leo VI.[347] Not surprisingly, a stylistic break is found between Zoe Carbonopsina and the next empress of whose seal comes down to us, Anastasia-Theophano that shows the empress with an even more elaborate and glamorous image. Anastasia-Theophano's granddaughters, Zoe and Theodora are represented with busts that closely resemble the sphragistic representation of their grandmother and one another, indicating family alliance. They appear with clearly articulated, modeled faces albeit identical with each other and the Virgin. Eudokia Makrembolitissa draws on the images of her eleventh century predecessors as seen on her seals where her bust is represented similarly to Zoe, Theodora, and Anastasia/Theophano; and for the obverse of her two surviving seals she selected images that were also cultivated by her female predecessors, the bust of the orans Virgin and the image of the Virgin with the hovering medallion of Christ. Eudokia's coin and seal imagery also looks back to representations of a much earlier predecessor, Eudokia Ingerina, and revives imagery that is known from book illuminations and ivories. The representations of Maria of Alania, on the other hand, follow types introduced by Makrembolitissa.

Coin and seal representation of middle Byzantine empresses provide us with a static, reticent imagery that communicates through the limited visual vocabulary of the frontal bust and occasionally the full standing figure of the empress dressed. The imagery acquires more complex meanings through the intended comparisons and contrasts between representations of empresses and male imperial predecessors, as well

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[347] There remains a tendency to use the abstract style to represent two or more figures appear side by side on the face of the coin even after the return of the more naturalistic imperial image, which usually characterizes single busts.

as through the continuity of the visual tradition between empresses and the introduction of subtle, but significant changes over time in the representation of the female imperial figure. The intended messages of coins and seals may be further broadened by the type accompanying the effigy of the empress on the other side. This type may include the representation of an imperial colleague, an inscription, or from the second half of the tenth century on typically a figure of the Virgin or Christ. The presence of Christ on a coin or seal of an empress typically articulates that she is in possession of the executive imperial power. Representations of the Virgin on coins and seals link imperial women with the important, state sponsored shrine of the Blachernai and the various icons it housed. Evidence for a more personal devotion can only be detected on the coins of Zoe and Theodora, who introduce new numismatic types onto their coins, the image of Christ Antiphonites and the Virgin with the hovering medallion on her chest reflecting their individual devotional preferences.

CHAPTER 4: MONUMENTAL IMAGERY AND THE EMPRESS

This chapter examines representations of Byzantine empresses in monumental images displayed in public or private spaces. From the throng of nearly seventy empresses of the late eighth through the late eleventh centuries representations of only fourteen survive, undoubtedly a small fragment of the numerous images of empresses that have been originally produced.[1] Paul Magdalino's observation should be kept in mind: ". . . the study of Byzantine imperial art depends to a much greater extent on a knowledge of what has been lost."[2] As accidents of survival decimated the number of images of Byzantine empresses, it is necessary to consider how representative is the extant visual evidence. Only three monumental effigies survive with representations of empresses. In addition to the surviving images, a series of Byzantine texts offers evidence of lost representations of empresses. Some of these texts provide direct evidence in describing lost representations, while other textual sources in combination with visual evidence attest to practices that yield indirect information about the production and use of images of empresses. The analysis of this evidence is essential to evaluate, supplement, and contextualize the scanty remains of the pictorial evidence at our disposal. This chapter explores the surviving visual evidence together with textual sources that describe lost monumental images to investigate the variety of concerns articulated in monumental images of empress of the eighth through the eleventh centuries and to illuminate the complex processes in which images of imperial women were used in Byzantine society.

Images in Public Spaces

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[1] Three other imperial women who married foreigners left behind their images produced in Bulgaria, Russia, and the Western Roman Empire during this period – Maria-Irene (grand-daughter of Romanos Lekapenos), the purple born Anna (the sister of Basil II and Constantine VIII), and Theophano (niece of John Tzimiskes).

[2] Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982): pp. 123-81, especially p. 123.

No freestanding statues of emperors or empresses survive from the eighth-eleventh centuries, and only a few problematic textual sources mention the setting up of statues in this period.[3] The *Patria* reports about a bronze statue (stele he chalke) Constantine VI had set up for his mother, Irene in the round end of the hippodrome (eis ten fialen tou Hippodromiou) to commemorate the healing (eis therapeian autes) of the empress, but provides no information about its appearance.[4] There is a further statue from the eighth century mentioned by the *Patria*, a representation of Constantine VI at the Exakionion on a column.[5] Berger, however, doubts the accuracy of the identification of these images with Irene and Constantine given that the extant archaeological and textual evidence suggests that freestanding statues were not produced after the sixth century, and these are the only references attesting to statues of Irene and Constantine; further, in his view the identification of the statues fits into a pattern characteristic of the *Patria*, which attempts to identify ancient sculptures with known historical personages.[6] While Berger is probably right in suggesting that no such bronze statues were erected for Irene and Constantine, the passage reporting about Irene's statue appears to contain a

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[3] For a discussion of the textual evidence for the erection of statues in Byzantium after the early seventh century, see Rudolf H. W. Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike*, *Archaeologica 24* (Rome: 1982), pp. 21-35, who persuasively argues that the sources traditionally taken as evidence for the production of statuary after the early seventh century have been misinterpreted.

[4] See Theodor Preger, ed., *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (New York: 1975), p. 278. According to Berger's translation, the statue stood in a fountain of the hippodrome, elevated on columns, see Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos*, *Poikila Byzantina 8* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1988), p. 549: "Das Frauenstandbild aus Bronze in der Brunnenschale des Hippodromes auf dem Säulchen ist Eirene die Athenerin, das ihr Sohn Konstantin zu ihrer Ergötzung afstellte." For a discussion of the term stele, see Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* , pp. 23-25, 34. Cormack, considering the report as reliable evidence, emphasized that this was the first time since the reign of Philippikos that information about the production of imperial images in the round survives. Robin Cormack, "The Arts during the Age of Iconoclasm," in *Iconoclasm*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin (Centre of Byzantine Studies, University of Brimingham, 1977), pp. 35-44, especially p. 40. For the view that imperial statues were still produced in the eighth century, see Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* (Copenhagen: 1959), p. 102; Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 55-75, p. 71, no. 96.

[5] Preger, ed., *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* , pp. 181-182.

[6] Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , pp. 352, 549. As sources for these *Patria* passages Berger suggested a chronicle dating to the reign of Irene and Constantine, see ibid p. 82, this conclusion, however, seems to contradict his assertion that the author misidentified ancient statues with Constantine and Irene. One would expect that in a text written during the reign of Irene and Constantine the author would be able to identify images of the reigning monarchs with certainty. For a different explanation for the source of the erroneous identifications, see Stichel, *Die Römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* , pp. 24-25.

kernel of truth, as we are informed from another source that after Irene recovered from a hemorrhage she commissioned a mosaic showing herself and her son at the Church of the Virgin of the Pege – the author of the *Patria* passage appears to have muddled this information into his identification of an ancient female statue as Irene to give his account the appearance of authenticity.[7]

An anacreontic poem of Leo Choirosphaktes (Magistros) from the tenth century offers evidence for mosaic representations of imperial figures in the secular context of a bath built or restored by the emperor Leo VI. Paul Magdalino argued that the mosaic decoration of the building included a representation of the emperor together with one of his wives, most likely the fourth, Zoe Carbonoposina, based on the following passage:

> See especially the sight of the earth-ruler (geouchous) on the proconch, wearing a rosy appearance, and holding a sword in his hands. From there the empress (basilissa) in turn throws out the beauty of petals, in her sweet face wearing a rosy appearance. Words cannot describe the beauty. O sisterly one, who has painted you and set you up to be gazed at, like a luxuriant shoot? After this scene, he has drawn the forms of rivers, with fiercely-turned faces, and inscribed metrical encomia."[8]

The adornments of the bath also included sculptural decoration representing "venerable old men, the raging fury and slaughter of wrath-raising wars. . . ." as well as mosaics rendering youths fishing, banquet scenes, and personifications of springs. Mango disputed Magdalino's interpretation and suggested that given the overall imagery described in the text it is more likely that the passage describes a mythological scene of

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[7] For a discussion of the lost mosaic at the Pege, see below. There is also a reference to a statue of Basil I given by Leo Grammaticus and Pseudo-Symeon that was re-carved from an ancient seated statue of most likely a philosopher (but identified as Solomon in the ninth century) and was buried in the foundation of Basil's new church, the Nea Ekklesia. Here, however, the re-carved statue was not put on display but was placed into the building's foundation in a manner of a sacred relic. See Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," , p. 62; I. Bekker, *Leo Grammaticus* (Bonn: 1842), pp. 257-258; I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), p. 692.

[8] Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise," in *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning.*, ed. Ann Moffatt, *Byzantina Australiensia 5* (Canberra: 1984), pp. 225-40, especially p. 230; Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): pp. 97-118, especially p. 117.

Poseidon and Amphitrite or Okeanos and Tethys, a plausible argument.[9] Therefore, this lost mosaic decoration does not furnish evidence for a lost imperial representation.

Images in the Imperial Palace

Although the many buildings and pavilions of the imperial palace must have been teeming with imperial images, none of these survive. Surprisingly, only one such decoration is known from the textual sources, the extensive mosaic cycle that adorned a chamber in the Kainourgion palace built by Basil I, as attested in Basil's biography written by his grandson in the tenth century. The *Vita Basilii* attests that the main space of the Kainourgion was a hall "supported on sixteen columns in a row..." and with an eastern dome.[10] Vogt reconstructed the Kainourgion, located north-east of the Chrysotriclinos (the main throne room), as a rectangular hall with a semicircular apse and a chamber with a square plan on its east side. It would be entered from the same space as the Chrysotryclinos, through the Tripeton.[11] The main hall of the Kainourgion was decorated with an extensive mosaic cycle located on the entabulature, the ceiling, and on the eastern dome. The imagery showed the enthroned emperor together with his generals and a narrative cycle presented Basil's imperial deeds, including his military conquests.[12] The room that opened from the monumental hall was designated as a *koitón* or bedchamber and was of rectangular or square plan. It contained a floor mosaic with a phoenix as a central motif surrounded by eagles at the corners while the upper sections of the walls and the ceiling displayed the imperial family in mosaic.[13] The imperial mosaic

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[9] Cyril Mango, "The Palace of Marina, the Poet Palladas and the Bath of Leo VI," in *Euphrosynon. Aphieroma Ston Manole Chatzidake.* (Athens: 1991), pp. 321-30, fig. 163. In a later discussion of the same decoration Magdalino accepted Mango's conclusion that the mosaics were more likely to represent mythological figures than Leo VI and his wife, yet emphasized that the message of the *ekphrasis* is to praise the emperor through a building that he created, see Paul Magdalino, "In Search of the Byzantine Courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: 1997), pp. 141-65, especially p. 148.

[10] Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 196.

[11] Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1935), ground plan; R. Janin, *Constantinople Byzantine. Dévelopment urbain et répertoire topographique, Archives de l'orient chrétien, 4A* (Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1964), p. 115.

[12] Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 197.

[13] Ibid. , p. 197.

comprised two images, one with Basil and Eudokia enthroned in the presence of their children, the other with the whole family venerating the cross. The *Vita Basilii* reports:

> This is followed by another adornment of golden *tesserae* exhibiting the Emperor, who is the creator of this work, enthroned together with his wife Eudokia, both clad in imperial costume and wearing crowns. The children they had in common are represented round the building like shining stars, they, too, adorned with imperial vestments and crowns. The male ones among them are shown holding codices that contain the divine commandments (which they were taught to follow), while the female ones also carry books of the divine laws; in this way the artist wished to show that not only the male, but also the female progeniture had been initiated into holy writ and shared in divine wisdom, even if their father had not at first been familiar with letters on account of the circumstances of his life, and yet caused all his children to partake of learning. This is what he wanted to show by the painter's art independently of [the witness of] history. Such beauties then are contained in the four walls up to [the height of] the ceiling; and as for the ceiling of this chamber, it is not raised to a great height, but rests upon the walls in four-square form, being entirely decorated with gleaming gold and exhibiting in its center the victorious Cross made of green glass. All round the latter, like stars shining in the sky, you may see the illustrious Emperor himself, his wife and all their children raising their arms to God and the life-giving sing of the Cross and all but crying out that 'on account of this victorious Symbol everything that is good and agreeable to God has been accomplished and achieved in our reign.' There is furthermore an inscription of thanksgiving addressed to God by the parents on behalf of their children, and of the children on behalf of their parents. The one addressed by the parents is conceived in more or less the following words: 'We thank, Thee, O God most kind and King of them that reign, that Thou hast surrounded us with children who are grateful for the magnitude of Thy wonders. Guard them by Thy will lest any of them transgress Thy commandments, and so that, in this also, we may give thanks for Thy goodness.' The children's [prayer] is expressed as follows: 'We thank Thee, O Word of God, that Thou hast raised our father from Davidic poverty and has anointed him with the unction of Thy Holy Ghost. Guard him and our mother by Thy hand, while deeming both them and ourselves worthy of Thy heavenly Kingdom.' So much for the beauties of the said chamber."

Above the cornice on the four walls were found the enthroned images of Basil and Eudokia and all their children (Constantine, Leo, Stephen, Alexander and three daughters). The parents were probably placed on the wall opposite the entrance while the children would have been dispersed on the other three walls. The room was covered either by a barrel or a cross vault[14] decorated with a monumental cross in the center, with

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[14] Ibid. , p. 198, no. 74.

the imperial family adoring the cross probably approaching it from its two sides lead by the emperor and empress. The lost mosaic of the Kainourgion contains features that cannot be paralleled with the surviving images showing imperial families; this is the only image where emperor and empress appear enthroned together, and only one other extant representation shows the whole imperial family together including the daughters, the family coin of Theophilos (Fig. 38). While the Kainourgion mosaic was located in a semi-private space inside the imperial palace, the family coin of Theophilos may have had wider circulation, although it belonged to a very small, most likely ceremonial issue probably not intended for wide circulation amongst the general public. One may speculate that further representations of imperial families (including female children) may have existed in Byzantium most likely within the private context of the imperial palace decorating residential quarters of the imperial family as well as objects of private use commissioned for the imperial family, such as manuscripts, or ivories.

The family mosaic of Basil was located in a private, residential space, yet it appears that in the tenth century it was no longer part of the living quarters of the imperial family, although it seems to have been near the empress's chamber. The *Book of Ceremonies* informs us that when the newly Christianized princess of Rus, Olga, came to Constantinople in 959,[15] she spent some time in this building together with her entourage: "When the Empress rose from the throne, she went out through the Lausiakos and the Tripeton, and entering the Kainourgios, she passed through to her own bedchamber. Then the Princess and her relations and attendants went in through the Triclinium of Justinian and the Lausiakos and the Tripeton to the Kainourgios and rested."[16] Featherstone suggested that perhaps Olga was housed in this building during her entire visit, a plausible hypothesis.[17] Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Olga and her entourage had ample opportunity to examine the decoration of the Kainourgion and be sufficiently impressed by the glorious family history presented there – for they

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[15] Olga's visit is shown on f.135b in the Madrid Skylitzes, see André Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid, Biblitothéque de l'Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines de Venise, n. 10* (Venice: 1979), p. 79, no. 333.

[16] Jeffrey Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1990): pp. 293-312, especially p. 304; Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829), II/15, pp. 596.

[17] Featherstone, "Ol'ga's Visit to Constantinople," , p. 308, n. 25.

were looking at the grandparents, father, uncles and aunts of the reigning emperor, Constantine VII. It would have been inevitable to draw connections between the current imperial family and its predecessors. Thus the mosaic, originally set up to proclaim the establishment of a new dynasty, now demonstrated historical precedent and continuity, while also serving as prototype for the ruling family and foreign heads of state to emulate.

Images in Churches: Donor Portraits

There is more ample evidence attesting to imperial images in churches, representing rulers in acts of donation. The earliest monument is mentioned in a tenth century text, that reports about the mosaic commemorating the donation of splendid gifts to the church of the Virgin at the Pege[18] by Irene and her son, Constantine VI in the late eighth century:

> At the time when Irene ruled together with her son Constantine a troublesome suffering of hemorrhage befell her, and she neither partook of meat nor had a share of drink, but the fruitless drugs of the physician showed no useful effect, and when she was awaiting the end approaching with speed, she was told of a cure, she learned about the miracles of the Mother of God at the church of the Pege that happened on account of the drinking of the hallowed [water], and she had taken possession of the church with speed. And when taking possession [of the church] she began partaking of the hallowed [water], it kept back the flow of her blood, and her health was restored (?) again at the end,[19] in gratitude for which she, together with her son, dedicated [to the church] veils woven of gold (peplous chrysoypheis) and curtains of gold thread (perichrysa katapetasmata) (the kind commonly called *sôlênôta*)[20] as well

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[18] For a discussion of the church of the Virgin at the Pege, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie*, vol. III (Paris: 1953), pp. 232-237, Jean Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance. Recherses sur les anciens trésors des églises de Constantinople* (Paris: 1921), pp. 61-66, and S. Bénay, "Le Monastère de la Source a Constantinople," *Échos d'Orient* 3 (1900): 223-28, 95-300. Also see ODB III, p. 1616.

[19] Mango's translation begins here, see no. 21 below.

[20] See ODB II, p. 1113, where the definition of *katapetasma* is given as "a veil or curtain separating the sanctuary from the nave." Mathews argues that curtains had a more limited use in early Byzantine liturgy, than assumed, and that the first textual evidence for the closing of the curtain of the *templon* is attested in the eleventh century, see Thomas F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), pp. 170-171. The term *peplous chrysoypheis* is also used in Theophanes Continuatus to refer to cloths decorating Hagia Sophia in 923, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp. 402, 894; Mathews translates the term as golden cloths

> as a crown and vessels for the bloodless sacrifice decorated with [precious] stones and pearls. She also ordered that, as a lasting memorial, their portraits should be executed in mosaic on either side of the church [representing them in the act of] handing over the offerings that have been enumerated so as both to express their faith and to proclaim for all time the miracle [of the healing] of the hemorrhage through the setting up [of the portraits] and the offerings of the gifts.[21]

The emperors endowed the church on account of the healing of Irene's hemorrhage,[22] and thus memorialized their donation in mosaic panels that portrayed them holding rich offerings in outstretched arms. The text betrays little about the original composition of the panels, yet makes it clear that emperor and empress appeared on panels most likely facing each other on opposing walls of the church (possibly inside the sanctuary) with their respective gifts. Grabar proposed reasonably that this mosaic was similar to the imperial panels at San Vitale (Figs. 86-87) but suggested that the imperial figures appeared without entourage and with the many objects mentioned in the text displayed around them rather than carried by them. He dated the mosaics tentatively before 787 because of the lack of references to holy figures in the panels.[23] It is likely that the imperial figures appeared alone, as this mosaic commemorated an act of personal devotion and thanksgiving on a specific occasion, unlike the panels at San Vitale. The lack of references to holy figures is not surprising in an eighth century imperial panel, as

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and mentions that they are not necessarily curtains, see Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* , p. 164.

[21] *De sacris aedibus Deiparae ad Fontem* p. 880, in *Acta Sanctorum*, (Paris: 1863-1940), Nov. III, pp. 878ff. For the translation of the passage see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , pp. 156-157. Grabar offered a slightly different translation; according to his interpretation Irene herself offered the veils and curtains, while the crown and liturgical vessels she presented to the church together with her son, see Andre Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantine: dossier archéologique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1984), pp. 194-195. The text survives in Vat. Gr. 822 dated to the twelfth century. Mango dates the text to the tenth century, Efthymiadis, Brubaker, and Haldon follow Mango's dating, see Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Byzantine Collections of Miracles," *Symbolae Osloenses* 74 (1999): pp. 195-211, especially p. 205; Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680-850): The Sources*, ed. Anthony Bryer and John Haldon, *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs* (Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2001), p. 30.

[22] Theophanes does not report about Irene's recovery from a hemorrhage during her joint reign with Constantine.

[23] Grabar emphasized that the veil and the curtain were dedicated to the church by the empress alone while the crown and the liturgical vessels were donated together by mother and son. Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantine: dossier archéologique* , pp. 194, 196-197. For other donations to churches, see the donation of historiated altar-cloths by Maximianus to San Vitale in Ravenna in the sixth century and the donation of veils and vessels by Michael I to Hagia Sophia in 811, see Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* , pp. 167-168.

the regular integration of imperial and holy figures within the same image did not take place in Byzantine art until after the final defeat of iconoclasm in the ninth century, thus it is quite likely that these panels did not include the representations of holy figures; this however does not necessarily mean that there were no images of holy figures inside the church.[24] An inscription may have accompanied the panels that identified the figures and possibly specified the circumstances of the donation describing the various items offered to the church.

It is noteworthy that although the healing miracle affected only the empress, she decided not to have herself represented alone in the commemorative image. Rather than commissioning a representation focusing on personal devotion, Irene opted for an image that fit within the tradition of imperial iconography, where imperial couples appear in acts of donation together, as on the San Vitale panels. The panels proclaimed the empress's personal devotion to the Virgin and her reception of a miraculous cure and protection, and also presented an official vision of the reigning monarchs together, underscoring the legitimacy of Irene's joint rule with Constantine through the healing miracle that safeguarded the future of the empire. As Irene was a woman, her legitimacy was not established through military triumphs under God's protection, but through the healing of a specifically feminine infirmity of the body. Rather than concealing the ailment of her body, the empress turned it into a badge of honor, and a sing of divine protection and imperial legitimacy.

Another imperial couple, Zoe and her third husband, Constantine IX Monomachos, is shown in an act of donation on a mosaic panel partially preserved on the east wall of the south gallery of Hagia Sophia (Fig. 88).[25] This space housed an imperial *metatorion* in the tenth century — and likely later in the middle Byzantine period — as the *Book of Ceremonies* attests, and from here the empress attended the liturgy on Easter Sunday while the emperor listened to services here on Easter Sunday, the Feast of the

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[24] There is, however, the hanging described by Paul Silentiarius in Hagia Sophia showing Justinian and Theodora in the company of Christ and the Virgin, where imperial figures and holy figures appear together within the same early Byzantine image, see Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* , p. 166.

[25] A window is located immediately to the right of the panel, and next to the other side of the window is a second imperial panel representing John Komnenos and his wife Irene with their son Alexius.

Holy Cross, the Feast of the Purification, and the Feast of Orthodoxy.[26] The imperial family ascended the south gallery through a wooden staircase or a wide ramp that lead up from the lower level of the Shrine of the Holy Well.[27]

The sumptuously clad imperial couple is shown presenting gifts[28] to the enthroned Christ: Constantine holds a sealed purse filled with money, the *apokombion* and Zoe offers a scroll bearing the name of the emperor, most likely a *chrysobull* granting privileges to the church.[29] The inscriptions above the heads read: "Constantine, in Christ the God, autocrat, faithful emperor of the Romans, Monomachos; Zoe most pious empress;" the text on the scroll states: "Constantine, in Christ the God, faithful king of the Romans."[30] Both figures wear gold patterned purple garments and golden *loroi*. Although most of Zoe's figure is lost from the waist down, the remaining tesserae suggest that her *loros* was draped in the characteristic female fashion with the *thorakion*.

In addition to the loss of about one fifth of the lower section of the panel, the image displays a series of irregularities in the setting of the tesserae. Whittemore noted the loss of tessarea around the outline of all three heads and that the surfaces of the heads are slightly depressed in comparison to the rest of the tesserae; he measured the depression of the head of Monomachos at 8 mm, but gave no measurements for the

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[26] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, chs. 9, 25, 31, 36, 37; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , pp. 61-62, 90-91, 116-117, 140, 145-148; Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* , p. 131-132; Natalia Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," *Arte Medievale* X (1996): pp. 47-68, especially p. 64, no. 6. Oikonomides also emphasized that the south gallery was in direct connection with the building of the patriarchate, and that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries a series of Holy Synods were held in this part of the church, see Nicolas Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 36 (1978): pp. 219-32, especially pp. 225-226. Also see Cormack's comments about the function of the south gallery, Robin Cormack, "Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul," *Art History* 4 (1981): pp. 131-49, especially pp. 148-9, no. 38.

[27] Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , I, ch. 14, p. 125; Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople* , pp. 69-70, 90-91; Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* , pp. 93-94, 132; Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," pp. 49-52.

[28] For a discussion of this theme, see André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936), pp. 106-111, 153-155.

[29] Oikonomides argued that the title of the emperor inscribed on the scroll matches exactly the signature formula of official imperial documents suggesting that the scroll represents an official imperial *chrysobull*; see Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," p. 224.

[30] Thomas Whittemore, "A Portrait of the Empress Zoe and of Constantine IX," *Byzantion* 18 (1946-48): pp. 223-27, especially pp. 14, 17. The inscriptions above the heads read: *KωNCTANTINOC ЄN Xω ωτ ΘωAYTOKPATωP ΠICTOC BASIAЄYC PωMAIωN O MONOMAX*; *ZωH H ЄYCЄBЄCTATH AYTOYCTA:*; on the scroll: *+KωNCTANTIN ЄN Xω Tω Θω ΠICTOC BASIAЄYC P. MONOMAX.*

recession of the other two heads.[31] In a later publication he also referred to "the difference in size and handling of tessellae between those used in the inserted heads and those in the remaining parts of the original figures,"[32] yet his preliminary report provides no measurements of the size of tesserae used in the various parts of the figures.[33] Based on these irregularities, Whittemore concluded that all three heads have been replaced with new ones.[34] Thus, the head of Christ outlined by two rows of gold tesserae and his neck were replaced down to the neckline of his garment; from the emperor's portrait the pearl cross of his crown was retained along with the lower sections of the pendilia, while the crown, face, and neck were exchanged (Fig. 90); Zoe's whole crown with most sections of the pendilia was preserved and only her face and neck were exchanged. There is a marked difference between the insertion of the head of Christ, which is virtually seamless, and the incorporation of the other two heads that display rather awkward junctures and inconsistencies. Yet some small irregularities remain in the image of Christ: the neck of his garment is outlined on the right side by two rows of black tesserae,

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[31] Whittemore provides the following observations about the setting of the tesserae of each head. Regarding the head of Christ: "The mosaic surface of the face of Christ which was inserted later on, is not flush with the general surface of the panel, but is slightly depressed. The joining, where the head is set into the panel rungs outside the gold outline of the hair and around the opening of the garment of the neck." About the head of Monomachos: "The surface of the face is 0.008m lower than the surface of the surrounding gold background. The joining of the inserted head with the rest of the panel follows the rim of the crown, the outline of the hair at each side of the face, and inside the string of pearls, and is completed where the collar is attached to the garment." Regarding the head of Zoe: "The mosaic surface of the face is not flush with the surrounding surface, but is slightly depressed due to its later insertion. The joining between the inserted face and the surrounding panel follows the under-edge of the crown, the vertical line of the left pendant, the broken upper edge of the color, and the life of the right side of the face and hair." See Thomas Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* (Boston: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 42, 48, 53.

[32] Whittemore, "A Portrait of the Empress Zoe and of Constantine IX," p. 223

[33] He only gives measurements of the tesserae for the face of Christ, Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* , p. 42. Whittemore's argument that the heads have been set with different size tesserae and in a different manner than the rest of the bodies does not in and of itself furnish evidence for the replacement of the heads, as faces frequently are handled differently by mosaicists; the stones are smaller, their layout is different than any other part of a representation, as may be seen for instance on the Komnenian panel in Hagia Sophia. For photographs of the faces of the Komnenian panel showing the distinct rows of tesserae, see Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* , pl. XXVII, XXX.

[34] Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* , p. 9. He also noted, that "the mosaic itself gives no evidence of having been twice re-handled." See Whittemore, "A Portrait of the Empress Zoe and of Constantine IX," , p. 226. Mango, on the other hand remarked, that the mosaic may have undergone two successive changes, Cyril Mango, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia," in *Heniz Kähler: Hagia Sophia* (New York, Washington: 1967), pp. 47-60, especially p. 58.

while on the left only one row borders the garment; the red tesserae that form the outlines of the cross-arms in his halo are incorporated into the gold outline of his hair on the two sides but not at the top.[35] The other two heads show more pronounced irregularities (Figs. 89-91). The cross of the emperor's crown is slightly off center in comparison to the central jewel; the juncture between the end of the pendilia, the pearled collar, and the neckline of the original garment is awkward and inconsistent. The face of the empress appears somewhat small for the available space, and the orientation of her face and crown are different: her face is shown in a three-quarter view, while the crown is presented nearly frontally. Further alterations are notable in the inscriptions: the name of Constantine Monomachos replaced a different name in the inscription above his head and on the scroll held by the empress. The alterations indicate that an earlier panel was reused, from which they retained the bodies of the figures, the complete inscriptions of Zoe and Christ, part of the inscription of the former emperor, and certain parts of the earlier imperial portrait heads.[36]

Scholarly views are divided about the original identity of the emperor; most believe the image represented Zoe's first husband Romanos III,[37] while others argue for her second husband, Michael IV.[38] Two chief arguments have been advanced to support

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[35] Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," pp. 229-230.

[36] While most scholars accept the view that all three heads had been replaced, Schneider questioned whether the head of Christ had been replaced, see A. M. Schneider, "Fund und Forschungsbericht: Türkei," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1944-45): pp. 71-73, especially p. 73. Eyice also rejected the argument that the head of Christ was replaced, see Semavi Eyice, "Une nouvelle hypothese sur une mosaique de Saint Sophie a Istanbul" (Actes du XIIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Ochride, 1961), pp. 99-101.

[37] Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* ; Schneider, "Fund und Forschungsbericht: Türkei," , p. 72; Gyula Moravcsik, "Review of Thomas Whittemore, The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report." *Erasmus* 1 (1947): pp. 366-71, especially p. 369; Mango, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia," p. 58, although Mango remarked that a second change to the mosaic may have shown Michael IV; Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," p. 221, n. 6.

[38] Nikolajevic-Stojkovic and Teteriatnikov argued this view, see Ivanka Nikolajevic-Stojkovic, "Portraits impériaux dans le galerie méridionale de Saint-Sophie à Constantinople (in Serbian)," *Istoriski Casopis* II (1951): pp. 81-86; Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting." Further theories have also been advanced. According to one hypothesis, the original imperial figures represented in the panel were Leo VI and one of his wives (as he had two wives by the name of Zoe) from the late ninth or early tenth century, see Eyice, "Une nouvelle hypothese sur une mosaique de Saint Sophie a Istanbul." This theory, however, is unacceptable on grounds of style and imperial costume. Dölger, on the other hand suggested, that it was Michael V, whose name and image was replaced in the mosaic, see Franz Dölger, "Die Entwicklund der byzantinischen Kaisertitulatur und die Datierung von Kaiserdarstellungen in der byzantinischen Kleinkunst," in *Studies Presented to D. M.*

the claim that Romanos III was originally represented on the panel, one based on the analysis of the inscription, the other on historical evidence regarding donations to Hagia Sophia during the reign of Zoe's husbands. Whittemore concluded about the inscription on the scroll, that the size of the available space suggests that the original text contained an initial cross and seven letters, thus the name *RωMANOC* would fit perfectly while the name *MIXAHA* would be too short.[39] Yet Byzantine inscriptions typically are not formed from completely regularized letterforms nor do they always fill the available space. In the case of the inscription above the head of the emperor it is possible that the first word was one space indented, which would have accommodated for the shorter name of Michael.[40] The hypothesis, that the mosaic originally represented Romanos III is supported further by historical evidence; Skylitzes reports " He [Romanos III] knew that the income of the Great Church was insufficient because he had previously served as the oikonomos of this and of the other churches which were customarily served by the clergy of the Great Church. He now stipulated that an annual advance of eighty pounds of gold was to be made to it from the imperial treasury."[41] Romanos III granted a major donation providing significant yearly income to the church lessening its financial straits.

Robinson II (1953; Reprinted in F. Dölger, Byzantinische Diplomatik, Speyer, 1956, 130-151), pp. 985-1005, especially p. 137.

[39] Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* , pp. 17-20, Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," pp. 220-221. See, however, the more recent analysis of all inscriptions of the panel by Lee Francis Sherry, which allows the possibility that the name Michael was originally written on the panel rather than Romanos, in Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," pp. 66-67.

[40] The three lines of the inscription on the other side of the panel are not flush as the first line starts two spaces ahead of the other two lines. On f.2v of the Bible of Leo Sakellarios from ca. 940, the first five lines of the inscription within the miniature are not flush with one another; the first line is farther indented than the second and third lines, see Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), no. 42. On a tenth century ivory casket in Stuttgart, the inscription is comprised of three lines; the first line is indented by one space, while the other two are flush with one another, see Anthony Cutler and Jean-Michel Spieser, *Das mittelalterliche Byzanz, 725-1204, Universum der Kunst* (Munich: 1996), fig. 152.

[41] For English translation, see John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)*, trans. John Wortley (University of Manitoba, Centre for Hellenic Civilization, 2000), p. 201; Michael Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081-1261* (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1969), pp. 308-309; Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," p. 223. Oikonomides mentions that there was a donation given to the patriarch by Zoe and Michael IV at their wedding in 1034, however, he dismisses it as a bribe, which was much less significant than the donation of Romanos; ibid. p. 224, no. 17.

Most recently Teteriatnikov argued that the mosaic panel originally represented Michael IV rather than Romanos III, and contended that it seems unlikely a representation of Zoe and her first husband would be left unaltered during the reign of her second husband in a space frequented by the imperial family and the clergy.[42] She also emphasized that the evidence furnished by the alteration of the inscriptions does not suggest with certainty that Romanos's name rather than Michael's was replaced in the text. Teteriatnikov further pointed out that Psellos emphasized the generous patronage of Michael IV in building churches and monasteries. She further argued based on imperial portraits on coins that the body type depicted in the mosaic better fits the physiognomy of Michael IV than Romanos III, an argument hard to substantiate given the limited realism of Byzantine imperial portraits on coins. Finally, an extremely rare coin issue attributed to Michael IV and ascribed to a mint in Thessaloniki depicts on its obverse the rare numismatic type of Christ seated on a backless throne (Fig. 92), similarly to the representation of Christ on the mosaic panel, which in her view furnishes evidence that Michael IV was the patron of the mosaic panel.[43] It is, however, possible that the representation of Christ on the backless throne is pictorially associated no with a coin of Michael IV minted in Thessaloniki, but with another panel in Hagia Sophia, namely the donation panel in the narthex showing the Virgin enthroned with the Christ child on a backless throne while the emperors Justinian and Constantine make offerings to her (Fig. 93). The narthex panel shares similarities with the composition of Zoe's mosaic, and it is possible that a visual link was intended between the two representations in order to place the offering of Zoe and her husband into the wider context of imperial philanthropy and piety; the backless throne may have been used to enhance the pictorial association of the two panels.

While it is possible that the original panel showed Michael IV and Zoe, the evidence still favors the identification of the figure with Romanos III. If we accept that Romanos III was the emperor originally depicted on the panel, certain questions need to

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[42] For the possible explanation of this unusual situation, see my comments below.

[43] Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," pp. 54-57, 59-60. For Michael's patronage, see Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), pp. 105-108. Michael IV is known to have spent time at Hagios Demetrios on account of his illness, Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , p. 96, no. 1.

be answered. Is it possible that an image of Zoe with her first husband would have been retained during the seven years of her second marriage to Michael IV within the church, especially given the rumors about the alleged assassination of Romanos III by Zoe and Michael? While the circumstances of Romanos' death suggest that Michael IV and Zoe would have been better off modifying or obliterating the panel, it is possible that it remained intact during the reign of Michael IV. One may argue that retaining a representation of Romanos III and Zoe during the reign of her second husband may have been a device to combat gossip about the circumstances of Romanos' death. One may also suppose that this image served as a legal document recording a contract between the imperial couple and the church represented by Christ, as suggested by the imperial signature on the scroll held by Zoe that follows the formulation of imperial signatures on official documents and is written in the imperial red ink.[44] The inclusion of the imperial signature signifies that the image records a specific act, a legal transaction between the emperor and the church. If we accept the hypothesis that the image had a legal, documentary significance, it is possible to understand why is was not touched until the reign of Constantine Monomachos who presented Hagia Sophia with a donation that superseded that of Romanos III. Before this, however, it may have been in the best interest of the church to preserve the panel in its original state, as it guaranteed the payment of the annual income and at the same time served as a document of imperial philanthropy and piety.

An early fifteenth century text may be used to support the argument that the Zoe panel served the function of a legal document. The text describes an imperial couple in the act of donation at church of the Virgin Peribleptos:[45]

> As one enters the body of the church, on the left-hand side are represented many images, among them one of St. Mary, and next to it, on one side, is an image of an emperor, and on the other side, the image of an empress, and at the feet of the image of St. Mary are represented thirty castles and towns, the name of each one being

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[44] Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," p. 223. I thank Anna Kartsonis for stimulating my thinking in this direction.

[45] For the church of the Virgin Peribleptos, see ODB III, p. 1629, Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , pp. 227-231; S. Cirac Estopanan, "Tres monasterios de Constantinopla visitados por Espanoles en el ano 1403," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 19 (1961): pp. 358-81, especially pp. 374-377.

> written in Greek. And they said that these towns and castles belonged to the domain of this church and had been granted to it by an emperor called Romanus. Here are placed certain privileges on leather, sealed with wax and lead seals, which are said to be the privileges received by this church to the aforesaid towns and castles.[46]

This panel likely shows Romanos III with his wife Zoe in the presence of the Virgin, as Romanos founded the church and was buried there.[47] The text mentions that the land holdings donated to the church have been depicted below the feet of the Virgin,[48] and actual parchment documents with imperial seals have been affixed to the image regarding the privileges of these land donations. Here the image and the actual documents together serve to attest to the church's legal rights. The text does not inform us about the dates of the sealed documents nor does it give their precise number. It is possible that originally the panel had a document attached to it to underscore the legal significance of the image, and possibly over time as the church received new privileges or confirmations of old ones, further documents may have been collected together and affixed to the image. Whatever the case may be, the Peribleptos panel was understood as part of a legally binding document. It is possible that Zoe's panel in Hagia Sophia also had the original chrysobull attached to it, further enhancing the legal character of the representation.

Several suggestions have been made to explain the motivations behind the alterations of the heads on Zoe's panel in Hagia Sophia, yet no convincing argument for

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[46] This text comes from Clavijo who visited Constantinople in 1403, see F. López Estrada, *Ruy González de Clavijo: Embajada a Tamorlán* (Madrid: 1943), p. 37ff. For the translation see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 217.

[47] Mark Johnson, "The Lost Royal Portraits of Gerace and Cefalu Cathedrals," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 53 (1999):pp. 237-62, especially pp. 258-259. There is a second, sixteenth century text from Johannes Leunclavius attesting to a representation of an imperial family at the same church, the family of Michael Palailogos, his wife Theodora, and their son Constantine, see J. Leunclavius, *Pandectes historiae Turcicae,* ch. 51, in PG 159, p. 773; Johnson argued persuasively, that this text describes a second image not identical with the first panel, p. 258. For a different view, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 217, no. 164.

[48] Although there are images that show the donation of single towns or churches in dedicatory panels (for example the donation panel in the south vestibule of Hagia Sophia, where Constantine offers up a model of the city of Constantinople and Justinian presents a model of the church of Hagia Sophia to the Virgin and child), no representation survives where a large number of castles and towns are represented as part of the donation. There is, however, another text that attests to a similar iconography in which Paul Silentiary describes an altar cloth given to Hagia Sophia by Justinian, which represents his various foundations: "And on the hem of the veil shot with gold, art has figured the countless deeds of the Emperors, guardians of the city: here you may see hospitals for the sick, there sacred fanes." See Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 89; Mango mentions Egyptian textiles in Berlin, which furnish parallels to this iconography, as their borders represent images of churches.

the replacement of all heads has been offered. The replacement of the emperor's head is easy to understand as the alteration communicated a change in person and underscored that Monomachos's donation superseded that of his predecessor by granting revenue to the church enabling the celebration of daily mass.[49] The usurpation of portraits of imperial predecessors is a known phenomenon in Byzantine art, as also attested by the repainting of the features of Michael VII in the Coislin 79 to change him into Nikephoros Botaniates.[50] It is more difficult to explain the modifications done to the figures of Zoe and Christ, as these changes do not appear to be absolutely necessary. Two types of answers have been given to explain the changing of the faces of all three figures: one type downplays the significance of the alteration of all three heads and ascribes little meaning to it; the second type assigns great significance to the portrait changes and suggests that a fundamental reinterpretation of the panel had taken place.

Diverse suggestions have been offered for the replacement of the faces of Zoe and Christ. Whittemore proposed two explanations: either Zoe commissioned a "more pleasing portrait of herself" at the time when Romanos's head was replaced, or her image needed restoration as it might have suffered *damnatio memoriae* at the hand of Michael V.[51] Moravcsik rejected the latter suggestion on two grounds, namely the short time span of Michael V's revolt and the lack of any attempt to obliterate Zoe's name from the

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[49] Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," pp. 224-225. Skylitzes's chronicle records that mass was celebrated daily in the Hagia Sophia, and John Mauropous wrote two poems commemorating this donation, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)* , Constantine Monomachos, ch. 29, p. 253; for the Mauropous poems Oikonomides provides the following reference, P. de Lagarde, "Ioannis Euchaitorum metropolitae quae in cod. Vatic. gr. 676 supersunt," *Abhandlungen der Göttinger Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 28 (1881): pp. 1-228, no. 44, 45, p. 24. Teteriatnikov, on the other hand, connected the Monomachos panel with the annual donations given to the clergy, the poor, and the patriarch on Easter Saturday at the door of the Holy Well, which was located in the vicinity of the south gallery but on the lower level of the church, see Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," pp. 52-54. Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , I, 44, p. 172; where distribution of largess (*doreas*) is mentioned on Holy Saturday to singers and others.

[50] For the demolition of imperial portraits, also see the poems of John Geometres about Nikephoros Phokas, PG 106, no. 1, pp. 901-903, no. 56, p. 932.

[51] Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery* , pp. 17-20, and Whittemore, "A Portrait of the Empress Zoe and of Constantine IX," p. 223. Mango also suggested that Zoe's face may have been damaged during the revolt of Michael V, Mango, "The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia," p. 58.

panel,[52] and proposed that the replacement of Zoe's face reflected her wish to appear with a more youthful countenance, while the head of Christ was changed so that he would look in her direction.[53] Oikonomides suggested that earlier heads of Christ and Zoe produced between 1000 and 1020 have been transferred to the panel at the time of the alteration of Romanos' face, and attributed this action to the thrifty patriarch Keroularios.[54] Cormack argued that the restoration of Zoe's portrait annulled her position as the wife of Romanos,[55] and suggested that the head of Christ was replaced to show resemblance between the features of the emperor and Christ.[56] Schminck proposed the unlikely hypothesis that the face of Zoe was changed in order to represent the likeness of Skleraina (Constantine's lover) and as quid pro quo for such audacity the features of Christ were reset to reflect the appearance of the patriarch Michael Kerularios.[57] That the panel underwent *damnatio memoriae* during the revolt of Michael V seems unlikely, nor is it probable that earlier panels with the right measurements would have furnished the heads of Christ and Zoe. The arguments for similitude between the features of Christ and the emperor or the patriarch cannot be substantiated, while the suggestion that Zoe's features in fact show the face of Skleraina seems completely unfounded.

Kalavrezou suggested that the alterations of the heads reflect a new hierarchical order of the imperial figures that expressed the veiled criticism of the patriarch about the

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[52] Moravcsik, "Review of Thomas Whittemore, The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report," who noted that Psellos is the only historian who states that there were two days between the dethronement and the outbreak of the uprising on behalf of Zoe; see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book 5, ch. 26, p. 138.

[53] For Whittemore's response and counter arguments, see Whittemore, "A Portrait of the Empress Zoe and of Constantine IX," p 226-227. Whittemore maintains that Christ does not look at Zoe but at the audience.

[54] Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," p. 230.

[55] Cormack, "Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul," p. 143; he emphasized the importance of the annulment of Zoe's marriage to Romanos through the restoration of the panel, as the marriage of Zoe and Monomachos was a third marriage for both parties. Third marriages were clearly frowned upon by the Byzantine church.

[56] Ibid., pp. 143-144. More recently Cormack changed his interpretation regarding the similitude between the emperor and Christ, and suggested the unlikely interpretation that the panel may be seen as a subtle "imperial joke" poking fun at Zoe's vanity, see Robin Cormack, "The Emperor at St. Sophia: Viewer and Viewed," in *Byzance et les images. Louvre conferences et colloques. Cycle ed conferences organise au musee du Louvre par le Service culturel du 5 octobre au 7 decembre 1992* (Paris: 1993), pp. 223-53, especially pp. 240-242.

[57] Andreas Schminck, "'Rota tu volubilis,' Kaisermacht und Patriarchenmacht in Mosaiken," in *Cupido Legum*, ed. Ludwig Burgmann, Marie Theres Fögen, and Andreas Schminck (Frankfurt: 1985), pp. 211-34, especially pp. 225-226. See also C. A. Bourdara, "Quelques cas de damnation memoriae a la époque de la dynastie macedonienne," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32,2 (1982): pp. 337-46.

unlawful marriage of the imperial couple, as it was a third marriage for both parties, barely tolerated by the Church. In her view, the figure of the emperor was originally more frontal and Christ's head turned slightly toward him as his legs are still pointing towards the emperor. Accordingly, the new, less frontal position of the emperor shows him in a less favored, more subordinated position, on the same level with his wife, and the head of Christ indicates that he no longer makes a gesture of acceptance towards the emperor; therefore, the position of Zoe's head was changed to keep up the proper hierarchy, as she could not have appeared with a more frontal and thus less subordinated position than the emperor. Within this new hierarchy the emperor was placed exactly on the same level as his wife — save his privileged position to the right.[58]

That Christ originally turned his face toward the emperor, as argued by Kalavrezou, is hard to substantiate based on the visual evidence, and it is impossible to ascertain what direction he may have been looking originally. The suggestion that Christ is shown not accepting the offering of Monomachos is questionable.[59] It also must be noted that the original positions of the heads were not frontal although they appear to have been turned less sharply then they are now.[60] The sharply turned heads of the imperial couple are part of the iconography of donation imagery where donors are shown with turned bodies and heads, as for instance on the tenth century panel depicting Justinian and Constantine in the narthex of Hagia Sophia making an offering to the Virgin. The sharply turned faces of the emperor and empress make a strong visual

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[58] Ioli Kalavrezou, "Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia," in *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), pp. 241-59. Oikonomides also commented on the change in bodily positions of the emperor and empress, see Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," pp. 228-229.

[59] While it is clear that Christ is not looking in the direction of Monomachos, his face is slightly inclined toward him; although his eyes are directed away from him, the right side of Christ's face is visibly narrower than the left side of his face, indicating the his head is turned to his right ever so slightly, in the direction of Monomachos.

[60] The original cross and ends of the pendilia on the crown of the emperor demarcated the original position of the head: the cross is not placed in the center of the halo as one might expect on a frontal face, moreover, if one measures out the distance between the cross and the pendilia on the two sides, it is clear that the pendilia on the right side of the face are more distant from the central cross than the pendilia on the left side of the face, thus clearly the original head was turned somewhat as well. In the case of Zoe's head, her crown is not represented fully frontally, but slightly turned to her right. Zoe's crown is not located in the center of her halo; moreover, the triangular projection on the right side of the crown is significantly narrower than the one on the left side of the crown, indicating slight foreshortening.

parallel with the figures of Justinian and Constantine in the narthex, and perhaps the more pronounced turns of the heads were introduced to create a stronger link between the two panels in order to associate Constantine Monomachos more tightly with his illustrious predecessors, Constantine and Justinian.[61] Teteriatnikov suggested that the alteration of the faces reflected the needs of distant viewers, namely the patriarch and clergy, as the patriarchal *metatorion* was located in the next bay of the gallery, and the faces are oriented in such a way as to address distant viewers who moved between the patriarchal *metatorion* and the door at the east end of the gallery (Figs. 94).[62] However, one wonders why the orientation toward distant viewers was only taken into account at the time of the restoration of the panel and not when the panel was originally conceived. The panel cannot be seen from the interior of the second bay of the south gallery (the patriarchal *metatorion*) (Fig. 95),[63] and only becomes visible from under the eastern arch connecting the eastern and middle bays. The distance between the viewer and the panel who walks straight towards the door at the east end of the gallery decreases from about 20 m to about 15 m, which is a significant expanse to observe the finer details of the image (2.4 m wide and 2.44 m tall), but sufficient to see the overall composition and to recognize the various figures. It is impossible to say what the orientation of Christ's head, face, and eyes were in the original composition, therefore, interpretations based the changing of his head's position can only be conjectural. Yet as the panel stands today, there is a general orientation of his face towards Zoe, or more precisely in the direction to the right (Christ's left). In addition to making eye contact with viewers walking from the patriarchal *metatorion* towards the eastern door, Christ's gaze may also be intended to link the panel with the donation panel (Fig. 93) in the south vestibule of Hagia Sophia, which was in the very direction that Christ's was looking, albeit this panel was on the ground floor. Although Christ does not look directly at the empress, the orientation of his gaze could be perceived as being directed towards Zoe. Monomachos was elevated to the

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[61] In this panel the Virgin's face and body is inclined in the direction of Constantine on her left, while her eyes are turned in the general direction of Justinian on her right.

[62] Teteriatnikov, "Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting," p. 63.

[63] See Whittemore, *The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia at Istanbul. Third Preliminary Report. The Imperial Portraits of the South Gallery*, pl. I, for what may be seen from the central bay of the south gallery when looking east.

position of emperor through his marriage to Zoe, one of the last offspring of the Macedonian dynasty. The importance of the figure of Zoe in the panel could have been emphasized as a tribute to her dynasty, and was perhaps a declaration of alliance to the dynasty by Constantine Monomachos.

It is difficult to understand the patronage behind the image, as it was located in a space within the patriarchal church that was reserved for the use of the imperial family. Scholars argued either in favor of patriarchal or imperial patronage for the panel,[64] yet it might be more fitting to assume that the commissioning of such a work was the product of a delicate negotiation process in which both emperor and patriarch were involved. In this location it is impossible to imagine a representation that would not have met the approval of both the emperor and the patriarch. Subversive messages are unlikely to be incorporated into a representation located in such a place, even if it was not a widely public image.[65]

Other monumental images of empresses may have been lost from the decoration of the galleries of Hagia Sophia, since the Russian archbishop and pilgrim Antony of Novgorod reported ca. 1200, that "In the gallery are painted all the patriarchs and emperors, as many of them as there have been at Constantinople, and (it is indicated) which ones among them were heretics."[66] It is not clear from the text whether these images included empresses, and a reference to all emperors and all patriarchs may just be

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[64] Oikonomides argued for patriarchal patronage, see Oikonomides, "The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia," pp.226-227. To support the thesis of patriarchal commission he also argued that the south gallery was connected to the patriarchat and was the meeting place of the Holy Synods in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Cormack, on the other hand, saw distinctly imperial patronage behind the panel, Cormack, "Interpreting the Mosaics of S. Sophia at Istanbul," , Robin Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London: George Philip, 1985), pp. 184-190.

[65] Yet at least in the twelfth century the gallery could be visited by pilgrims, which may have been the case earlier too when the space was not occupied by the imperial family or the clergy. The anonymous Russian pilgrim reports about his visit to the gallery of Hagia Sophia, although it is unclear whether he was able to walk through all parts of the gallery or certain parts were off limit to visitors, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 237.

[66] Ibid. , p. 237. There is also evidence about a series of imperial portraits, this time on an icon, from another Russian pilgrim from the late fourteenth century, who states that at the church of St. John of Mangana, there were two icons in the narthex, one depicted eighty emperors, the other showed one hundred patriarchs, see George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), p. 140. A similar, but later example is found in the *Encomium of Trebizond* from the pen of Bessarion from the fifteenth century, which describes the imperial palace of Trebizond and states: "All around, on the walls, is painted the choir of the emperors, both those who have ruled our land and their ancestors. . ." See Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 253.

a rhetorical device simply meaning several emperors and patriarchs. In addition to the Zoe panel another imperial mosaic survives on the gallery of Hagia Sophia, which depicts and emperor with his wife: John II Komnenos (1118-1142), his wife Irene-Piroska, and their son Alexios flank a figure of the Virgin (Fig. 96).[67] These panels indicate that empresses did appear together with their husbands on monumental images in Hagia Sophia. But even if wives of emperors were not typically depicted along their husbands, it is quite likely that at least portraits of empresses who achieved exceptional power either as regents or as sole rulers would have been commemorated by images on the gallery of the Great Church. Therefore one may speculate that representations of Irene the Athenian, the iconophile Theodora, Zoe Carbonopsina, Anastasia-Theophano, Theodora Porphyrogenita, and Eudokia Makrembolitissa would have been included on the gallery. Supportive argument may be found in a fifteenth century manuscript of the chronicle of Zonaras in Modena, which contains portrait busts of Roman and Byzantine emperors. Among the Byzantine emperors five empresses are included: Helena, Pulcheria, the purple-born Zoe and Theodora, and Eudokia Makrembolitissa, however, it is striking to note that Irene the Athenian and Theodora the iconophile were not depicted (Fig. 97-100).[68] A similar imperial gallery, albeit on a much smaller scale, is attested in a fourteenth century Latin document that describes a monumental image comprised of six panels on the west façade of the cathedral of Cefalu representing Norman rulers, including a queen, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[69] The surviving visual and

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[67] The third surviving panel on the gallery of Hagia Sophia is an image of the emperor Alexander from the early tenth century.

[68] The manuscript is at the Biblioteca Estense in Modena, Codex gr. 122. Spatharakis suggested based on a close study of imperial physiognomies included in the manuscript, that it is likely a copy of an earlier historical manuscript that was also decorated with portraits of emperors, however, he did not list or discuss the empresses represented in it, see Ioannis Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453, Byzantina Neerlandica 8* (Leiden: 1981), pp 172-183. I have not been able to consult this manuscript in person, only in reproductions published by Spyridon Lampros, *Leukoma Byzantinon Autokratoron* (Athens: 1930), who reproduces all portraits of Byzantine emperors from this manuscript from Constantine Chlorus to Constantine XI. The empresses appear on f. 73v (Helena), f. 101v (Pulcheria), f. 246v (Zoe and Theodora), f. 268v (Eudokia Makrembolitissa) of the manuscript.

[69] Johnson, "The Lost Royal Portraits of Gerace and Cefalu Cathedrals." Johnson compared and connected this dynastic series with similar series described by Byzantine writers, such as the decoration of the refectory of the monastery of St. Mokios in Constantionple, which depicted Manuel I Komnenos, his father, grandfather, and Basil II, and the narthex of the church of the Virgin Hodegetria in Constantinople, which again depicted Manuel and six of his predecessors, for these see also Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , pp. 226-227.

textual evidence indicates that representations of at least regent or ruling empresses may have been included in imperial picture galleries set up in Hagia Sophia and other Byzantine churches, and may have also been incorporated into the decoration of historical manuscripts.

There is also evidence of an imperial image commemorating a donation set up at the monastery of St. Michael at Sosthenion in a text of John Mauropous that might be linked with the empress Zoe, although this panel had an iconography different from the Pege and the Monomachos panels discussed above:

> Thy mighty hand, O Christ, has crowned the mighty emperors and given them their kingdom; thy goodness has made them an inexhaustible fount of rich gifts. The entire earth is bounteously filled with these gifts and gives glory to thee, the giver of kingdom; she implores thee, the assister of kingdom, to be ever present, to fight along, to strengthen the emperors, to grant them long life and joy. In testimony thereof this image has been painted: for the monks of this venerable monastery of the First Angel at Sosthenion, having been favored with many rich gifts, give this reward to their kindly benefactors by artfully depicting thee, O Christ, in the act of crowning them here.[70]

This iconography, the emperor and empress (or possibly a co-emperor) crowned by Christ, is a frequent theme in middle Byzantine imperial art.[71] It is, however, unclear from the text if the image also included a representation of the mother of god imploring Christ while he crowns the imperial figures.[72] The representation is a commemorative panel providing thanksgiving to the rulers for their patronage to the church – although the circumstances of this are not made clear by the text. This image might commemorate the

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[70] Ibid., p. 221, for the Greek text of Mauropous, see PG, CXX, p. 1176. Mango notes that the monastery in question is that of St. Michael at Anaplous, however, he does not identify the imperial couple depicted in the image. Janin, on the other hand believes that St. Michael Sosthenion and St. Michael at Anaplous were two different structures, see Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , pp. 359-362.

[71] For a discussion of the meaning of this imagery, see Chapter V.

[72] If the Virgin was included, what did this composition look like? Two parallels may give an idea: the Egbert Psalter from the second half of the eleventh century, f.10v where Christ enthroned crowns a royal couple who approach his presence from left and right in the company of their patron saints, who present them to him; Theodore Gabras blessed by Christ while his wife Irene is lead to the presence of Christ by the Virgin,Petrop gr. 291, f. IIv-IIIr, dating to 1067, see Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), pp. 39-43, p. 59-60, and figs. 14, 27-28. Or should we imagine the Virgin in a medallion like on the imperial panel above the Royal Door in Hagia Sophia? See John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art, Art and Ideas* (London: Phaidon, 1997), fig. 105.

generosity of Constantine Monomachos and Zoe, as suggested by Belting,[73] although it is possible that it shows Zoe with one of her other husbands, or even possibly Constantine VIII and his wife.[74]

A further imperial representation in a church is attested in the Book of Ceremonies, which reports that as part of the ceremonial carried out on the days of St. Elijah and the commemoration of the dedication of the Nea Church an image of Basil I was venerated by the imperial procession at the Nea: ". . . they [i.e. the imperial procession] lit candles in front of the image (eikon) of Basil, the emperor who loves Christ. . ."[75] Basil I had a particular devotion to the prophet Elijah and he was the founder of the Nea thus it is hardly surprising that his own image was found there and that it received commemoration on these feast days.[76] Unfortunately the text provides no information about the appearance of Basil's image. Placing portraits of founders or benefactors in churches was an old tradition, as the previous examples have shown. A fresco of Maria of Alania and her son in the narthex at the monastic church at Papikion likely belongs to this category.

Recent excavations at the monastery of Mount Papikion in the Rhodope Mountains in Northern Greece revealed remnants of fragmentary frescoes in the main church that have been identified as representations of Maria of Alania and her son (Fig. 102-103).[77] These badly damaged fragments come from the left wall of the central

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[73] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 565, n. 5. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie* , p. 361 believes that the Sosthenion was founded or restored by Basil II.

[74] As Mauropous was born ca. 1000, and served as an orator in the court of Constantine IX until c. 1050, when he had to leave the city, it is likely, although not absolutely certain, that his text describes an image of Monomachos and Zoe. There survive other epigrams from his pen that also describe representations of Constantine Monomachos, further strengthening the case that this passage also documents an image of Monomachos and his wife Zoe. For the other epigrams, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 220.

[75] Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , ch. 28, p. 109, and ch. 29, p. 112.

[76] For a discussion of Basil's devotion to Elijah, see Paul Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988): pp. 193-96. For a discussion of the Nea, see Paul Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 37 (1987): pp. 51-64.

[77] Avtandil Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bilprogramme - Ikonographie - Stil*, ed. Gundram Koch (Wiesbaden: 2000), pp. 183-210. For a discussion of two fragments of other figures from the same monument, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , pp. 52, no. 18. Silver coins of Nikephoros Botaniates and Maria of Alania were also

entrance from the narthex to the nave, a location that suggests that the figures were patrons of the church. The first fragment shows the shoulder, neck, and the lower half of the face of a female figure with her elevated left arm reaching with open palm towards a second figure of smaller stature, whose shoulder, neck, and lower third of the face are visible (Fig. 102). The female figure wears a large round earring (or pendant of a headdress) with pearls radiating from it.[78] Her dress terminates with a tight collar around her neck, and the shoulder of her dress has a different fabric than the sleeve.[79] Her face is oval with a small mouth and narrow nose. The other figure's facial features have been completely lost, but the lack of a beard and of any indication of headdress or earring, and his smaller stature indicate that it is likely the representation of a boy. His dress has a simple opening around the neck, he does not wear the *loros*, and the pattern of his robe is also somewhat similar to the silk patterns seen on the imperial dresses in Coislin 79. The second fragment represents perhaps the upper part of the head of the empress, and shows a small section of the right forehead and hair, and the crown (Fig. 103). The crown is made up of three triangular projections resting directly above a row of pearls, the projections themselves decorated with pearls and precious stones.[80] Unfortunately not enough survives from the image to suggest what the original appearance of the full panel would have been like, nor is it clear whether the image was integrated into the overall program of the decoration or was only a self-contained donor panel. The other evidence

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found at the site, and in a grave a seal-ring inscribed with the name Maria Botaniatena along with remnants of a dress made with silver thread, nails of a coffin, see Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," , p. 187.

[78] Although Maria of Alania is not shown with an earring in the Coislin 79 (Fig. 163) or on the enamel plaque attached to the Khakhuli Triptych (Fig. 141); large earrings appear on representations of empresses and female saints from the late eleventh century on, as for instance on the Komnenian panel on the gallery of Hagia Sophia from the 1120s-30s (Fig. 96), or on the female saints on the mosaic of Hosios Loukas, Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 83, no. 2 (1971): 263-361, figs. 49-50. Personifications have been shown with large, round earrings even earlier, as for instance the personification of Almsgiving in the Chludov Psalter from the ninth century (Fig. 170) or the female figures on the Bamberg Silk dating to the reign of Basil II. For an illustration of the Bamberg Silk, see Elisabeth Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: 1997), 39-51, fig. 13.

[79] The pattern shown on the arm of her dress is similar to the fabric of the imperial dress shown on f.1(2bis)v of the Coislin 79 (Fig. 163) which includes a representation of the same empress, here, however, the empress does not wear an earring.

[80] Although the pieces are rather fragmentary, it does not appear that the crown would have had a second tier.

found in the same monastic complex suggests that the empress may have been directly involved with the building and decoration of church at Papikion.[81]

A Commemorative Image in a Cappadocian Church

The Pigeon House church at Çavuşin[82] contains the only extant imperial representation in Cappadocian churches, a representation of Nikephoros Phokas with his wife Theophano and other family members (Fig. 104-105).[83] Although documents do not survive regarding its foundation or decoration, [84] the painted program suggests that it was likely dedicated to Michael or to the archangels.[85] While the precise date and circumstances of the commission are unknown, there are two events from the life of the emperor Nikpehoros Phokas with which the painted program has been linked; Nikephoros, who hailed from a Cappadocian noble family, was proclaimed emperor by his troops in Caesarea, only about a 50 km distance from Çavuşin, and he is reported to have spent the winter of 964/5 in Cappadocia in the company of Theophano and her sons during his campaign against the Arabs in Cilicia.[86]

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[81] See Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben."

[82] G. de Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises Rupestres de Cappadoce* (Paris: 1925-42), I, 2, pp. 520-550; Marcell Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Greenwich, Connecticut: 1967), pp. 135-138, pl. XXVI, fig. 302-329; Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "La glorification de l'empereur à l'église du Grand pigeonnier de Çavuşin," *Histoire et Archéologie. Les dossiers* 63 (1982): pp. 73-77; Lyn Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 33 (1983): pp. 301-39; Nicole Thierry, *Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de Çavuşin* (Paris: 1983-1992), 43-57, pl. 16-18; Annabel Jane Wharton, *Art of the Empire. Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery. A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* (University Park, London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), pp. 33-35; Nicole Thierry, "Le souverain dans les programmes d'églises en Cappadoce at en Géorgie du Xe au XIIIe siècles," *Revue des études georgiennes et caucasiennes* 4 (1988): pp. 127-70, especially pp. 128-1311 Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris: 1991), pp. 15-22, pl. 21-23.

[83] For a brief discussion of the region of Cappadocia in the middle Byzantine period, see Wharton, *Art of the Empire. Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery. A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* , pp. 13-18.

[84] Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 307. Rodley believes the painted decoration was carried out in one phase; Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 308.

[85] *Thierry, Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de Çavuşin* , p. 43; Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," , p. 322; and Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* , p. 15.

[86] Skylitzes reports about Nikephoros' campaign: "In July of the second year of his reign, seventh year of the indiction, Nikephoros advanced against Cilicia with a massive army of Romans together with Iberian

The frescoes of the northern apse *(prothesis)* and the adjoining north wall display a series of panels that are linked through their imperial theme; the apse of the *prothesis* presents the emperor, Nikephoros Phokas (963-969) and his wife Anastasia-Theophano standing amidst family members (Fig. 106), while a second panel shows Nikephoros's kin and imperial successor, John Tzimiskes on horseback in the company of another equestrian figure, Melias Magistros (Fig. 105);[87] along the walls of the main apse, the holy emperors Constantine and Helena appear amidst church fathers (Fig. 107). The larger painted program also includes a cycle of the life and ministry of Christ and a gallery of saints; the main apse shows a prophetic vision while the southern apse displays the Virgin and child on a lyre-backed throne in the company of angels (Fig. 108).[88]

The north side-apse shows five haloed figures dressed in imperial *loroi* (Fig. 106).[89] The central, bearded male figure stands in front of a backless throne and touches the left arm of a female figure dressed as an empress while he holds a cross in front of his chest in his left hand. Another figure stands behind the empress, while two bearded male figures stand on the emperor's left. Inscriptions identify four of the figures; the text above the head of the emperor reads: "Lord preserve our pious rulers always, Nikephoros and our empress Theophano."[90] Two further inscriptions identify the male figures to the left of the emperor as *KACAPOC* and *KOROΠΑΛΑΤΗC*, titles given to the emperor's father Bardas and brother Leo in 963, soon after his accession.[91] Leo holds a cross in his

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and Armenian allies. Theophano and her children were with him too. He left her in a fortress known as Drizion before entering Cilicia and then advanced into that region where he destroyed the cities of Anabarzan, Rhossos and Adana and quite a number of other fortresses. He hesitated to approach to Tarsus of Mopusestia as winter was already drawing on. He left an adequate detachment there and withdrew to pass the winter in Cappadocia." For English translation, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)* , p. 146. Leo the Deacon also reported about the campaign and Nikephoros's stay in Cappadocia, see Leo the Deacon, History III, PG 117, p. 740. See Thierry, *Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de Çavuşin* , p. 45.

[87] For a discussion of the Maleionos-Tzimiskes panel, see Nicole Thierry, "Un portrait de Jean Tzimiskès en Cappadoce," *Travaux et mémoirs* 9 (1985): pp. 77-84.

[88] For the full program of the decoration, see Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* , XXVI.

[89] The *loros* worn by the emperor here appears to be the simplified type with an opening for the head; this is the earliest representation of this type of the *loros* in monumental art, see Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 19-20.

[90] For the inscriptions, see Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises Rupestres de Cappadoce* , I, 523, Inscription no. 94; Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* , I, 138, fig. 327.

[91] See Leo the Deacon's report, PG 117, p. 732.

left hand.[92] The fifth figure lacks a label, and has been identified with various members of the imperial family, such as the wife of the *kouropalates* Leo,[93] or the wife of Bardas and mother of the emperor, Eudocima Maleinos,[94] or Basil II.[95] The identification of the unnamed figure with Basil II is the most convincing in my view. The figure is shown with shoulder length hair and without a beard, and has a clearly visible diadem crowning his head.[96] Basil II was crowned co-emperor during the reign of his father Romanos II on 22 April 960 and later appeared on the coins of Nikephoros Phokas in the position of co-emperor.[97] Basil II was 5 years old when Nikephoros rose to power and 11 when he died, thus the lack of the beard on the representation poses no problem – it shows a junior emperor of young age. A similar representation of junior emperors with shoulder length hair and fresh face appears for instance in Paris gr. 510 (Fig. 147), where two sons of Basil I appear alongside their mother. The presence of the diadem also suggests that this figure should be understood as Basil II who was publicly associated

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[92] Rodley suggested that the crosses in the hands of the imperial figures may indicate that the artist was working from models representing imperial saints, such as Constantine and Helena, who typically carry crosses, as imperial figures usually are not shown with the cross. See Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 310. Thierry argued that the overall message of the imperial image is the recapture of the relics of the True Cross, and suggested that the representation, including the Tzimiskes panel, is an image of an imperial triumph presenting the three victorious commanders of the 964-5 wars, see Thierry, "Un portrait de Jean Tzimiskès en Cappadoce," pp. 482-3. Thierry also suggested that the crosses may also refer to the celebration of Easter before the campaign, see Thierry, *Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de Çavuşin* , pp. 46-47.

[93] Rodley asserts that the figure must be female and reads the diadem as a fillet. She provides no argument why the figure should be identified with the wife of Leo, see Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 310. Also see, Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* , p. 21, no. 50.

[94] Brooks argued for this identification based on hairstyle and lack of beard, and emphasized that the gestures of the imperial couple articulate their connection in marriage. In her view the image also proclaims a strong alliance between the Maleinos and Phokas families, and underscores Nikephoros's relationship with Saint Michael Maleinos (Eudocima's brother) who was revered by Nikephoros. See Sarah T. Brooks, "Nikephoros II Phokas and Theophanu in Çavuşin: The Imperial Family as Model" (Abstracts of Papers, Byzantine Studies Conference, University of Kentucky, 1998), pp. 23-24. For a discussion of the Maleinos and Phokas families, see Nicole Thierry, "La peinture de Cappadoce au Xe siècle. Recherches sur les commanditaires de la nouvelle eglise de Tokali et d'autres monuments," in *Second International Byzantine Conference, Delphi 1987. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos and his Age.* (Athens: 1989), pp. 217-46, especially pp. 223-228.

[95] Thierry, *Haut moyen-âge en Cappadoce. Les églises de la région de* Çavuşin , p. 45.

[96] Thierry also reads his headgear as a diadem, see ibid. , p. 45, no. 4.

[97] Although Basil's brother, Constantine VIII was also crowned co-emperor during the reign of his father in March of 962, he did not appear on the coins of Nikephoros Phokas. During Nikephoros' reign his father Bardas also received the title co-emperor, yet he was never associated with him on the coinage either. See Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), III/2, pp. 575, 580-582, pl. XLI.

with Nikephoros' rule, since clearly the heads of Bardas and Leo were shown without diadems within the same image.[98] The group therefore presents the five top members of the imperial hierarchy – the emperor and empress, two junior emperors (Basil and Bardas), and the next ranking official, the *kouropalates*.[99] Nikephoros is shown as a legitimate ruler protecting the interests of the rightful heirs to the throne who at the time of his succession were too young to rule. It appears significant that the emperor stands in front of a throne, a rare feature of surviving imperial representations; his gesture towards the empress suggests that Nikephoros invites and elevates the empress to join him on the throne. After all, Nikephoros was proclaimed emperor by his troops at Caesarea on 2 July 963,[100] and was crowned emperor upon his arrival to Constantinople on 16 August of the same year;[101] only about a month after his coronation did he marry the widowed empress on 20 September.[102] Thus formally and ceremonially Theophano did not transmit the power to him, although she appears to have been actively negotiating with Nikephoros to ensure the future of her sons.[103] This image conveys the idea of the just general elevated to the position of emperor and protecting the interests of the ruling dynasty and its junior heirs to the throne.

The imperial panel decorating the prothesis is tightly interwoven into the overall decoration program of the church and was clearly planned as part of the larger pictorial context. Constantine and Helena appear dressed in matching *loroi* along the southern

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[98] This is all the more striking, as the insignia of the *caesar* did include a crown without a cross, see ODB I, p. 362, and Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 43, pp. 217-225 that describes the elevation of the *caesar*.

[99] For a discussion these titles, see J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (New York: 1911), pp. 33-36; ODB I, p. 1157.

[100] For this event, see I. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus* (Bonn: 1838-1839), II, p. 348.

[101] Ibid. , II, p. 351.

[102] Ibid. , II, p. 351. For a discussion of the accession of Nikephoros to the throne, also see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers Universty Press, 1957), pp. 284-285; Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*, vol. 9, *Byzantina Sorboniensia* (Paris: Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Civilisation Byzantines, 1990), pp. 20-21; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 498-499.

[103] Skylitzes reports that Theophano invited Nikephoros soon after the death of her husband to celebrate his triumph in Constantinople, but also reports that immediately after his accession he banished her from the palace for a short time before he decided to marry her, see Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)* , pp. 139, 142. Modern historians assume Theophano's active involvement in the political wrangling following the death of Romanos II, see Gustave Schlumberger, *Un Empereur Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: 1890), ch. 5, pp. 203-249; Charles Diehl, *Byzantine Portraits*, trans. Harold Bell (New York: 1927), pp. 214-217.

side of the lower wall of the central apse among holy bishops (Fig. 107).[104] Similarly to the representation of Nikephoros and Theophano, their figures and faces are turned towards each other as they hold a large cross between them; their costume also recalls the dress of the reigning imperial couple. As Jolivet-Levy noted, standing at the north side of the nave one can see both panels together, and through their visual link a comparison and association is formed between the first Christian emperor and his mother, and the current imperial couple.[105] The conscious association of the reigning emperor with Constantine the Great is a topos of Byzantine imperial ideology, and frequently emperor and empress together were compared with Constantine and Helena in images or acclamations.[106] Such associations served to legitimize the reigning emperor by placing him into the larger historical context of Byzantine imperial rule and religious orthodoxy. In this case, however, a further association may also have been intended. During his campaign to Cilicia, Nikephoros was able to recapture a relic of the true cross that has been lost to the Arabs in the ninth century, a feat comparable in significance to Helena's recovery of the true cross.[107] This association underscored Nikephoros' orthodoxy and his ability to protect his Christian empire.

The imperial panel is also linked pictorially with the representation of the Virgin and Christ receiving the homage of two angels in the southern side apse, which is its compositional *pendant* (Fig. 108). The visual connection is underscored by the prominence of the thrones represented in the two images; although their shapes are different, they are shown with similar decorations and components. The earthly and the heavenly court are placed here side by side, alluding to the ultimate source of

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[104] Rodley noted the unusual placement of Constantine and Helena in the apse wall along with holy bishops and suggested that with this arrangement "they are given prominence to imply a similar piety for the living emperor in the north apse." Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 316.

[105] Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* , pp. 18-19. Also see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* , p. 40.

[106] For instance, Irene and Constantine VI were acclaimed as new Constantine and Helena in the acts of the Second Council at Nicaea, while Basil I and his wife, Eudokia Ingerina were compared visually to Constantine and Helena in the Paris gr. 510. For the importance of the ideology of linking reigning emperors to Constantine, see for instance Paul Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines. The Rythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries. Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Variorum, 1994).

[107] For a recovery of the cross lost to the Arabs in 877, see Schlumberger, *Un Empereur Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* , p. 504; Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus* , II, p. 363.

Nikephoros's power, which is seen and presented as divinely sanctioned. Visual association between the imperial panel and the heavenly court is further enhanced through the representation of two monumental archangel figures, most likely Michael and Gabriel in the arched niches adjoining the side apses (Fig. 104-105).[108] The archangels are dressed in the *loros* like the emperor and appear as his heavenly peers and protectors.

The imperial representation is placed into the context of a second set of images whose primary emphasis is on military prowess; these representations have been reasonably interpreted as visual references to Nikephoros's military victories.[109] The triumphal arch shows two panels with military themes: Joshua's vision of the archangel Gabriel under whose protection he was able to take the city of Jericho on the north panel and an unidentified soldier saint on the south panel — no doubt both references to the emperor's military successes (Fig. 108).[110] The north wall adjoining the niche with the monumental archangel shows two equestrian figures dressed in military dress; one is clearly identified by an inscription as Melias Magistros, while the other is most likely John Tzimiskes,[111] two important generals of the Byzantine army, and political allies of Nikephoros (Fig. 105). On the same wall a series of standing military saints are shown with drawn swords and have been identified as belonging to a representation of the forty

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[108] Two diminutive figures appear below the feet of the archangel in the north niche. Remnants of an inscription indicate that the small figures were the patrons of the decoration. Rodley speculated that the patrons were local magnates with connections to the military, perhaps the Phokas family. Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," pp. 313-314, 324. Jerphanion, on the other hand argued that the two equestrian figures of the North wall were the founders of the church, see Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises Rupestres de Cappadoce* , I, pp. 523-525, 529-530.

[109] Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 323. For military bias in Cappadocian churches, see Wharton's comments on New Tokali Kilisse, Wharton, *Art of the Empire. Painting and Architecture of the Byzantine Periphery. A Comparative Study of Four Provinces* , p. 31, and on the Pigeon House Church, ibid., p. 34.

[110] For the vision of Joshua, see Joshua 5/13-15, for the capture of Jericho, Joshua 6. Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises Rupestres de Cappadoce* , I, 530; Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," , p. 322. Brubaker endorsed the interpretation that the Joshua before the archangel scene is a reference to a successful military campaign, see Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, 6* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 194. For the identification of the soldier saint, see Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," p. 317.

[111] Jerphanion, *Une nouvelle province de l'art byzantin. Les églises Rupestres de Cappadoce* , I, p. 530; also see G. P. Schiemenz, ""Herr, hilf deinem Knecht." Zur Frage nimbierter Stifter in den kappadokischen Höhlenkirchen.," *Römische Quartalschrift* 71 (1976): pp. 133-47. The inscriptions have been repainted, and the crown and pendilia have been added to the figure of Tzimiskes at a later point, Thierry, "Un portrait de Jean Tzimiskès en Cappadoce," , pp. 478, 481.

martyrs of Sebaste.[112] These holy warriors appear as active members of the army lead by Melias Magistros and John Tzimiskes and clearly reference Nikephoros' career and leadership. Their prominent representation in this context may also allude to the emperor's desire to declare those who died fighting the Muslims martyrs of the Orthodox Church.[113]

Conclusion

Monumental images of empresses do not survive in public spaces of secular nature. The extant imagery and the lost representations attested in textual sources come from two spheres: the imperial palace and churches. Monumental images that include empresses always represent them together with their husbands and/or with their family; no image of an empress represented alone comes down to us from the monumental sphere.[114] This is a striking difference from representations of empresses in the early Byzantine period as well as from representations of emperors in the middle Byzantine period. Middle Byzantine emperors frequently appear alone in imperial representations, as for instance on ivories attributed to Constantine VII, or on the mosaic of Alexander in Hagia Sophia; they may also be shown in the presence of saints, as on the Leo scepter, on the Crown of Leo VI, or on the mosaic panel above the main door of Hagia Sophia; or together with their male officials, as in a miniature in the Coislin 79; or in the presence of the patriarch, as on the lost mosaic of the Chrysotriklinos where Michael III appeared in the presence of the patriarch; or on horseback in the presence of personifications as on the Bamberg Tapestry; or even in the presence of other Christian rulers, as on the Holy Crown of Hungary. Images in which empresses appear show them either in a dynastic context, as on the lost mosaic of the Kainurgion Palace or on the fresco the Dove Cote in Çavuşin, or more frequently as donors or founders, as on the Zoe panel at Hagia Sophia.

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[112] There are further military saints throughout the decoration who have been identified as belonging to the forty martyrs of Sebaste. See Rodley, "The Pigeon House Church, Çavuşin," pp. 316-319. As Rodley pointed out, it was highly unusual to represent the forty martyrs in military garb, the only other example being Göreme chapel 3, see ibid., p. 318.

[113] Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* , p. 288.

[114] The only category of images where this may have happened was on representations of sainted empresses, such as Theodora and Theophano, although no large scale images of these saints have survived.

The visual vocabulary of the representations of empresses is rather limited; they are only shown in a handful of image types and compositional arrangements. This again contrasts with representations of the emperor in the same period, which may show narrative contexts, as attested by the *Vita Basilii* and poems of Mauropous who recount the various representations in which the deeds of Basil I and Constantine Monomachos were represented.[115] Clearly, monumental imagery that included representations of empresses put emphasis on their roles as wives and mothers and emphasized their association with and dependence on the emperor.

However, the evidence discussed in this chapter also indicates that there must have been many images now lost that represented the founders of churches or monasteries, and among these there would have been a host of representations of empresses, for we are well informed about the patronage activity of imperial women in this period. The reference to Basil's image in the Nea Ekklesia also has another implication, for it underscores the fact that members of the Macedonian dynasty publicly honored an icon of the founder of their imperial line. We know from various sources that the Macedonian house fostered the veneration of several of its predecessors and members, among them the empresses Theodora (wife of Theophilos) and Theophano (first wife of Leo VI), who were elevated as saints and whose abbreviated Lives and images were included in the Menologion of Basil II produced ca. 1000.[116] It is possible that other images, now lost, of these empresses were set up and venerated in public, for making an image of a saint is typically part of the 'canonization' process.[117] Although

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[115] Also see the twelfth century examples offered by Magdalino and Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century."

[116] Irene the Athenian was also elevated as a saint, probably around the mid-ninth century, however, no middle Byzantine representations survive that show Irene as a saint. Images of a Saint Irene become popular in the middle Byzantine period, yet it is unclear, whether her images should be identified with Irene the Athenian, or with another Irene, the daughter of Licinius from the fourth century. Moreover, a representation of a Saint Eudokia also survive from Constantinople from the tenth century, which has been variously identified as Athenais-Eudokia (wife of Theodosius II in the fifth c.), Eudokia Baiana (third wife of Leo VI in the tenth century), and Fabia-Eudokia (first wife of Heraklios in the seventh century); see Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "Saint Eudokia and the Imperial Household of Leo VI," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 4 (1997): pp. 699-707; Areti Papanastasiou, "Saint Eudokia the Empress" (Abstracts of Papers - Twenty-Seventh Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, University of Notre Dame, 2001), p. 24.

[117] No formal procedure of 'canonization' existed in this period in Byzantium. The process of the recognition of sanctity, called canonization in the West, has not been well studied for the middle Byzantine period. The available evidence suggests that in this period the recognition process of saints was not highly regulated by the church; it was a sort of grassroots movement that grew out of local veneration that gained

Theodora and Theophano were not widely popular saints, their veneration was clearly fostered by the imperial family, and it would be reasonable to suppose that images of them were produced at least in Constantinople. The empress Theodora was elevated as a saint for her leadership in the restoration of the veneration of images probably some time around the end of the ninth century. It is possible that images of her were produced and venerated on the Feast of Orthodoxy, a ceremony that commemorates the defeat of iconoclasm.[118] Theophano's image may have been displayed in the church that was originally dedicated to her by her husband, Leo VI, which, however, was soon rededicated to all saints, and to which a lateral chapel consecrated to saint Theophano was added during the reign of Constantine VII. The imperial ceremonials celebrated on the feast days of Constantine and Helena and of All Saints both included a visit to the chapel of Theophano inside the church of All Saints.[119] A glass cameo of uncertain date depicting Saint Theophano and lead *hystera* amulets with the image of Theophano have come to light (Fig. 158-159).[120] These small, humble objects support the conjecture that

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momentum for various reasons. For the most recent discussion of the process of the recognition of sanctity in the middle Byzantine period see Caren F. Calendine, "Theosis and the Recognition of Saints in Tenth Century Byzantium" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1998), pp. 5, 126-139; Paul Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium" (Ph. D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1999), pp. 91-95. It seems that at the end of the 13th century a fundamental change occurred in the recognition of sanctity in the Orthodox Church, perhaps under the influence of extensive contacts with the Latin Church. For a discussion of canonization in the late Byzantine period see Ruth Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period," in *The Byzantine Saint. University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Studies Supplementary to Sobornost 5*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: 1981), pp. 67-87, especially pp. 83-87; Alice-Mary Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium*, ed. N. M. Vaporis, vol. 8, *The Archbishop Iakokvos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources* (Brookline, MA: 1983), pp. 21-30; Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, vol. I, *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D. C.: Dumarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), p. vii.

[118] Although no images of the Feast of Orthodoxy survive from the middle Byzantine period, several examples of it have come down to us from the Late and Post Byzantine periods, there is however no evidence that could connect the introduction of Theodora's feast and the Feast of Orthodoxy into the church calendar in the late ninth century and the appearance of these icons ca. 1400. See Robin Cormack, "The Triumph of Orthodoxy," in *National Art Collections Fund Review* (London: 1989), pp. 93-94; Valika Foundoulakis, "The Icon of Orthodoxy in the British Museum: An Example of Late 14th Century Constantinopolitan Art" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of London, 1998).

[119] Gilbert Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints," *Symmeikta* 11 (1994): pp. 201-17

[120] For a discussion of the glass cameo, see Marvin C. Ross, *Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Reserach Library and Collection, 1962), no. 104, fig. LVII/104; for the hystera amulet, see Ioli Kalavrezou, ed., *Byzantine Women and Their World* (Cambridge, MA, New Haven, London: Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2003), no. 172. Also see Chapter VII.

there may have been images of Saint Theophano on display in public places in Constantinople, for cameos and tokens frequently copy large scale icons.

CHAPTER IV: THE EMPRESS ON IVORIES

Only two surviving ivories of the middle Byzantine period include representations of empresses: a richly decorated box, the so-called David Casket (Fig. 109), and a single panel, called the Romanos Ivory (Fig. 115). The Romanos Ivory was inserted into a Western book cover in the eleventh century, where it remained until 1805.[1] The two ivories are linked through the iconography of their imperial representations, as both show Christ standing between an imperial couple while he blesses or crowns each figure with his own hands, a scene often referred to as double coronation. The dating and the identification of the imperial couples represented on these ivories is controversial. First I will discuss the dating controversies, the identification of the imperial couples, and the interpretation of the imagery of each object in turn, and finally will explore the broader significance of the double coronation iconography.

The David Casket

The David Casket at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome[2] shows an imperial couple blessed by Christ on the top panel of its lid, while the other sides of the box display an extensive David cycle (Figs. 111-114).[3] The casket was completely dismantled and rebuilt in the seventeenth century, when a long section of its inscription was re-carved

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[1] Auguste Castan, "La première entrée des archevêques de Besancon sous l'ancien régime," *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation du Doubs* (1875): pp. 207-18, especially p. 218.

[2] I thank Dottoressa Barberini and the staff of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome for allowing me to study the David Casket.

[3] The casket is made entirely from thick panels of ivory with few strips with filling ornaments. It is 16.1x8.4x10.3 cm large with walls 7-8 mm thickness, see Anthony Cutler and Nincolas Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," *AB* LXX (1988): pp. 77-87, especially p. 81. The structure, carving technique, assembly, and imagery of the casket indicate that it is an expensive and unique luxury object made to fulfill the distinctive specifications of its patron; for a discussion of ivory as a luxurious commodity in the middle Byzantine period see Anthony Cutler, "Prolegomena to the Craft of Ivory Carving in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *Artistes , artisans et production artistique*, ed. X. Barral i Altet (Paris: 1987), pp. 431-75, especially p. 455. It was elaborately painted; red, green, blue, brown, and black color remnants are still observable in the grooves of the carving. For the colors used on Byzantine ivories, see Carolyn Connor, *The Color of Ivory: Polychromy on Byzantine Ivories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univeristy Press, 1998).

together with one of its figural panels.[4] The top of the lid is divided into three registers; the top register is filled by five lines of an inscription, the second register shows Christ blessing an imperial couple, while in the third a second couple appears on the two sides of a tree-like ornament. Both imperial figures are dressed in the *loros* and are shown with three-quarter views; they hold a scroll[5] in their outer hands and lift the palms of their other hands towards Christ. Christ is rendered on a larger scale, yet all three figures stand on the same level side by side. The second couple is shown with courtly dress and in a three-quarter view with lifted palms, although their outer hands have been lost. The lid displays the following text (Fig. 110):

XPICTεVΛOΓHTONΔε
CΠOTωNΞVNωPIΔA:
ΔYΛHΞV NωPIC
ΠPOCKV NεIKA
TAΞI AN

The interpretation of this inscription has been disputed.[6] Cutler and Oikonomides read it as follows, *Χριστεύλόγητον δεσποτῶν ξυνωρίδα δούλη ξυνωρὶς προσκυνεῖ κατ'ἀξίαν,* and provide the following translation: "The couple of servants adore, as they should, the imperial couple, which is blessed by Christ."[7] Gouillou and Maguire, however, read the first line as *Χριστ'εὐλόγη τον δεσποτῶν ξυνωρίδα* and offered the translation: "O Christ bless the imperial couple; the couple, your servants, duly make obeisance to you."[8] From the

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[4] See Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," pp. 81-82.

[5] Although the proportions of these objects held by the imperial figures suggest a scroll, it is also possible that the carver intended to represent the akakia.

[6] I thank Professor Pierre A. MacKay for discussing this inscription with me and for his valuable suggestions.

[7] Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," pp. 82-83.

[8] Henry Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," *AB* LXX (1988): pp. 88-103, especially p. 89; Andre Guillou, "Deux ivoires Constantinopolitains datés du IXe et Xe siècle," in *Mélanges Ivan Dujcev, Byzance et les slaves. Études de Civilization* (Paris: 1979), pp. 207-11, especially pp. 207-208. Wessel provides the same reading, see Kaiserbild, K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), III, p. 755. Westwood gives the following translation: "O Christ bless the wedded-pair of our Masters; The wedded-pair of slaves beseeches thee according to their deserts." See J. O. Westwood, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum.* (London: 1876), p. 355.

two readings and translations the latter should be favored, with the caveat that the text refers to two couples in the two different clauses.[9]

The inscription continues on the bottom border of the lid and encircles the body of the casket:

Θησαυρ[ός] δώρων ὑψηλῶν, αὐτοκράτορ
ἡ σὴ ψυχὴ κ[αι] σκεῦος θείων χρημάτων.
Πλὴν κ[αὶ] θησαυρ[ὸσ] προτερημάτων ξένων
τὸ σὸν σκῆνοσ ὦ βασιλις εγγαρ
τηλικούτω συζύγω ἀξίασ σοσ
[ ]άτω.

Your soul, o emperor, is a treasury of sublime gifts and a vessel [full] of divine goods. But also your body, o empress [is] a treasure of marvelous qualities [ ] such a husband [ ][10]

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[9] It is more likely that *XPICTεVAOΓHTON* should not be read as an adjective modifying the word *despoton*, as argued by Cutler and Oikonomides, but rather as an imperative whose subject is Christ followed by the article *ton*, as suggested by Guillou and Maguire. That the text should be read as two sentences (or independent clauses) is supported by the placement of a full stop after the word *ξυνωρίδα*. However, it is more likely that the expressions "imperial couple" and "couple of servants" refer to two different couples as argued by Cutler and Oikonomides, since the term servant (*doulos*) is typically not used to refer to emperors in inscriptions on Byzantine works of art with the exception of the coins of Theophilos. The other middle Byzantine image that depicts an imperial couple in the presence of the donor is the Otto and Theophano ivory dating to ca. 982-83. The term servant (*doulos*) is not applied to the imperial couple but to the donor, a certain Johannis, who is depicted crouching under the suppedinum of the emperor. His inscription states: *k[uri]e boeth[e]i t[o] s[o] doul[o] io[anne mona]ho amem*, see Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), no. 337, pp. 499-501. Other middle Byzantine works containing imperial images that were presented to emperors as gifts or were commissioned by emperors do not refer to the emperors with the term servant either, as attested by the lost mosaic of the Kainurgion (see Chapter IV), the Paris Gr. 510 (Fig. 146-147), the Berlin Leo Scepter (Fig. 5), the Vatican gr. 1613 (Figs. 153-156), the Coislin 79 (Figs. 162-165), or the Barberini gr. 372 (Fig. 168), to name a few examples. Furthermore, other objects that have imperial associations, such as the cameos of Christ and the Virgin in the Victoria and Albert Museum that have invocations on behalf of the emperors Leo VI and Nikephoros Botaneiates, respectively, or the Chalices of Romanos II in Venice, or the Cortona reliquary (Fig. 121) presented to Nikephoros Phokas do not apply the term servant for the emperor in their inscriptions; for the cameos, see Evans and Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium*, nos. 126, 130, for the Chalice of Romanos II, see Buckton, Heterington, Prior, *The Treasury of San Marco*, Venice, pp. 129-131. Furthermore, on imperial seals the emperor never refers to himself as slave while other high ranking officials of the church and state, such as the patriarch or the basileopator do refer to themselves as slaves of Christ or the Mother of God. This indicates that the imperial couple and the other couple descirbed as "servants" in the inscription of the Palazzo Venezia casket cannot be the same, and the two couples represent two distinctive pairs of inidviduals.

[10] Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," pp. 82-83; Cutler and Oikonomides underlined the re-carved portions of the text, which contains mistaken and incomplete readings of the original text. Gouillou and Maguire supposed that the word autokrator is an abbreviation of its possessive form and translated the text as follows: "Your soul is a treasure chest of gifts from lofty emperors, it is a vessel of imperial riches. Furthermore, your body, O empress [ ] is a treasure chest of foreign assets, for such a great husband [ ]." Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," , p.

The date of the casket and the identity of the imperial couple have been debated ever since the box was first published in 1876; scholars have variously identified the imperial couple as Basil I and Eudokia Ingerina, Leo VI and his second or third wife, John Tzimiskes and Theodora, the Armenian king David and Maria, and even as Joan of England and William of Sicily.

The casket received much attention around the turn of the nineteenth century.[11] Schlumberger dated it to the ninth or tenth century and hypothesized that it was a bridal gift commemorating the wedding of an empress but without suggesting who she might have been.[12] Graeven dated the box to the second half of the ninth century[13] and argued that it was not of Byzantine origin.[14] Stryzgowski proposed that the casket was made in Armenia in the late ninth century and that the lid depicts an Armenian king called David and his wife Maria.[15] Goldschmidt and Weitzmann also ascribed Armenian origin to the

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91. Westwood's translation is as follows: "Emperor, thy soul is a casket of lofty gifts and a vessel of divine things. Moreover, too, thy tabernacle, O Queen, is a casket of foreign gains: for thou art a partner worth so much to thy [fair?] partner." Westwood, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum.* , p. 356. Cutler and Oikonomides believe that the text first addresses the emperor and then the empress, while Maguire assumes that the whole text is addressed to the empress, who is said to be a descendant of emperors and is of foreign origin. It is more likely that the word *autokrator* is a vocative addressed to the emperor than an abbreviated form of plural genitive as suggested by Gouillou and Maguire. In this case Cutler and Oikonomides's interpretation should be favored since it sets up a parallel address first to the emperor then to the empress. It is, however, possible that the word *xenon* should be translated as "foreign assets" as suggested by Gouillou and Maguire, perhaps referring to the foreign origin of the empress. Maguire accepted Guillou's reading of the letters following the word basilis as *ΕΙΓΑΡ*, which would be an abbreviation of the name of the empress, Eudokia Ingerina. Guillou, "Deux ivoires Constantinopolitains datés du IXe et Xe siècle," p. 208. This interpretation is, however, unlikely. This section of the inscription is part of the re-carved portion and from here on the rest of the text is garbled and missing a substantial section. Cutler and Oikonomides suggest that *εγγαϱ* is a misspelling of *επαϱ*, see Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," p. 82 no. 19. A substantial portion of the original text has been lost since the re-carved letters take up more space than the original letters do and did, see Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," p. 82 n. 19.

[11] First published by J. O. Westwood, *A Descriptive Catalog of the Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum* (London: 1876), pp. 81, 354-356.

[12] Gustave Schlumberger, "Un coffret byzantin d'ivoire du Musée Kirchner a Rome. Présent de noce a une basilissa," *Monuments et Memoires* 6 (1899): pp. 191-94. Schlumgerger erroneously identified the two figures placed below the imperial couple on the lid of the casket as a saint and the Virgin.

[13] Hans Graeven, *Frühchristliche und mittelarterliche Elfenbeinwerke in photographischer Nachbildung. Aus Sammlungen in Italien* (Rome: 1900), pp. 31-33, no. 57-61; he also noted that one of its scenes was restored in the sixteenth century following the iconography of the original.

[14] Hans Graeven, *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 21 (1900): 98, no. 5.

[15] J. Strzygowski, "Response to Gustave Schlumberger, Un coffret byzantin d'ivoire. . ." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* X (1901): pp. 728-30. Venturi followed this attribution in Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'art italiana* (Milan: 1902), II, pp. 600-01.

box, and dated it the tenth or eleventh century,[16] while Dalton argued for its Italian origin.[17] Between the early '30s and mid-70s the casket received little attention. In 1975 Robertson argued, following Dalton, that the casket had a Romanesque rather than a Byzantine style, and proposed that it was perhaps made as a gift for the marriage of Joan of England and William of Sicily in 1177.[18] Later Wessel still argued for an Armenian origin in the tenth-eleventh century, yet also noted that the costume, insignia, and titulature suggest that the imperial couple depicted on the lid is Byzantine.[19] Gouillou reaffirmed the Constantinopolitan origin of the casket and suggested that it commemorates the marriage of Basil I with Eudokia Ingerina in 866.[20] After Gouillou's work the Byzantine origin of the casket has been accepted, yet the proposed dates of its production range between the last quarter of the ninth and the second half of the tenth century. Recently Oikonomides and Cutler argued that the casket was made for the third marriage of the emperor Leo VI,[21] while Maguire suggested that it was a gift for Basil I.[22]

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[16] Adolf Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: 1979), p. 63-64; they attributed the re-carving of one scene and part of the inscription to a seventeenth century hand.

[17] O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford: 1911), p. 221.

[18] Eleanor Robertson, "The Rome Casket," in *Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice*, ed. Giles Robertson and George Henderson (Edinburgh University Press, 1975), pp. 11-15.

[19] K. Wessel and M. Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst* (Stuttgart: 1963-), III, p. 755.

[20] Guillou, "Deux ivoires Constantinopolitains datés du IXe et Xe siècle."

[21] They dated the casket to the late ninth century based on the analysis of the epigraphy of the original sections of the inscription, as they noted the similarity of letter forms with the inscriptions of the miniatures of the Paris gr. 510 (880s), of the Berlin scepter (late ninth or early tenth century), mosaic inscriptions at Hagia Sophia in Thessalonike (ca. 885) and in the north tympanum of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (880-890). They also emphasized that the traditional form of the *loros* worn by the imperial couple on the lid was in vogue until the reign of Constantine VII who introduced the simplified form of the *loros*. Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," p. 84. There are, however, representations of the traditional *loros* after the introduction of the simplified *loros*, therefore the *loros* shape itself cannot serve as evidence for dating, see Anthony Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," in *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. C. Moss and K. Kiefer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 605-10, especially p. 607; Maria G. Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," *Cahiers Archeologiques* 49 (2001): pp. 15-28.

[22] Kalavrezou endorsed Maguire's interpretation and dating of the casket, Ioli Kalavrezou, "A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites" (Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus and His Age, Second International Byzantine Conference, Athens, 1989 1987), pp. 377-96, and linked the stylistic features of the box to the Paris Gr. 510, and to a group of ivory icons characterized by heavy undercutting around the figures while the figures themselves are treated with exaggerated anatomy and facial features yet have a flat overall effect. She argued that these stylistic features belong to the first phase of icon production in ivory following the Iconoclastic controversy. However, one may note that the imagery on the casket does not have a flat effect and it has a different drapery treatment. Cutler demonstrated that ivory production started again ca. 800 both in the Carolingian West and Byzantine East, as the first evidence about Byzantine

Most recently Papanastasiou proposed that the box should be associated with the marriage of John Tzimiskes and Theodora in 969.[23]

The imperial titles included in the inscription of the box, i.e. *autokrator, despotes*, and *basilis*, are not helpful in providing a secure date for the production of the casket or a link with a particular imperial couple.[24] The title *autokrator* with the meaning independent imperial rule or senior rule has been used from the seventh century, although was not introduced into coins until the early 10th century.[25] The family portrait of Basil I in the Paris Gr. 510 uses the titles *anax romeon* and *despotes* for Basil, *despotes* for his sons, and *augusta* for Eudokia, while his seals use the titles *basileus, augustus* and *imperator*.[26] Leo VI is designated as *basileus* and *anax* on the scepter in Berlin and as a *despot* on a cameo at the Vatican, while he uses the titles *basileus romeon* and *augustus* on his coins, but only *augustus* on his seals.[27] Tzimiskes used the title *despotes, autokrator* on his coins and seals, and on a pair of earrings decorated with the busts of

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ivories is found in the Carolingian chronicle of Fortunatos, who reports that two Greek ivory plaques were presented to Charlemagne in 807, see Cutler, "Prolegomena to the Craft of Ivory Carving in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," p. 455. Unfortunately this text does not indicate what the subject matter of these ivories may have been, and no securely dated Byzantine ivory survives from the ninth century. The first such piece is the Leo Scepter, which is now accepted to depict Leo VI (886-912). Brubaker also endorsed the dating of the David Casket to the reign of Basil I, yet rejected the suggestion that it would commemorate a marriage, see Leslie Brubaker, "Imposing Interpretations: The Story of a Byzantine Ivory." (International Medieval Congress, Leeds, July 11, 2001). Parani also accepts the dating of the casket to the reign of Basil I, see Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," , especially p. 22.

[23] Areti Papanastasiou, "'. . . such a husband . . .'" *Manuscript of Paper Delivered at the 24th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference* (1998).

[24] Dölger argued that imperial titles included on luxury objects are not as accurate and systematic as titles found on official documents of the chancellery or on coins and seals, see Franz Dölger, "Die Entwicklund der byzantinischen Kaisertitulatur und die Datierung von Kaiserdarstellungen in der byzantinischen Kleinkunst," in *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson II* (1953; Reprinted in F. Dölger, Byzantinische Diplomatik, Speyer, 1956, 130-151), pp. 985-1005, pp. 1004-1005.

[25] Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), III/1, p. 179.

[26] For the Paris gr. 510, see Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), pp. 96-98; for Basil's seals, see G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel: 1972), no. 57-59, pp. 50-52.

[27] For the Berlin Scepter, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , no. 138, pp. 201-202; for the Vatican cameo, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , no. 126, pp. 174-175; for Leo's coins, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 507-522; for Leo's seals, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 60, pp. 52-53.

Tzimiskes and the Virgin, the title *despotes* is used again.[28] The titles *basilis* is also used frequently in the period and thus provides little help in identifying the possible imperial couple depicted on the lid.[29]

A chronological David cycle runs around the casket counterclockwise starting on the long side with the lock; the upper register shows the birth of David and the caressing of David by his parents, while the lower register depicts David playing the flute to his herd and killing a lion (Fig. 112). The second, short side of the casket presents the anointment of David by Samuel in the presence of his brothers above and David playing the harp to Saul in his bedchamber below (Fig. 111). The third, long side renders the Battle of David and Goliath in the upper register and David beheading Goliath in the lower register (Fig. 113). The forth, short side represents the Celebration of David's victory above, and the Wedding of David and Mikhal, and the Escape of David aided by Mikhal below (Fig. 114). On the same side the narrative continues on the lid, with David receiving the hallowed bread and Goliath's armor from Abimelech, the priest of Nob (Fig. 114). The next long side depicts the massacre of the people of Nob because of their aid to David and is followed on the short side by David cutting off a piece of the sleeping Saul's cloak (Fig. 112, 111). The narrative terminates with two scenes on the long side of the lid, directly above the beginning of the cycle: David presents the piece of cloak to Saul, and David is crowned king of Israel (Fig. 113). There are several departures from the typical iconography of the David cycle: the birth of David is a scene rarely encountered, while the *kolakeia* (David caressed by his parents) is unique, the depiction of Goliath as an actual giant and the representation of Saul's bed in the cave is unusual, and the iconography of David's coronation is also atypical.[30]

Maguire argued that several parallels can be found between the David cycle and the historical circumstances and imperial ideology surrounding the rise of Basil I to

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[28] For Tzimiskes's coins, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 589-598; for his seals, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 73, 74, pp. 65-67; for the earring, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , no. 167, p. 245.

[29] See Elizabeth Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," *Byzantion* (1976): pp. 243-91, especially pp. 279-284.

[30] As noted by Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," p. 83.

imperial power and proposed that the imagery justifies the murder of Michael III, Basil's predecessor and legitimizes Basil's rise to power. In this scheme Basil I is identified with David and Michael III with Saul.[31] Ample parallels may be noted between Basil's ascent to power and the life of David, as ninth and tenth century texts provide a rich source for this comparison.[32] Maguire's conclusion that the box was made as a gift for the emperor Basil I and Eudokia Ingerina, and was a product of the Macedonian imperial propaganda machine justifying Basil's rise to power is appealing.[33]

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[31] Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," especially pp. 89-93. Maguire also suggested that the rules of imperial encomium influenced the imagery of the David cycle, which would explain the inclusion of such extra-Biblical scenes as David's birth and his embrace by his parents. The *Vita Basilii*, a propagandistic presentation of the career of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty written by his grandson, Constantine VII, is one example of systematic comparison between the Basil-Michael III and David-Saul relationships, see Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," pp. 92-93 for a list of Davidic comparisons; for the *Vita Basilii*, see I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), Book 5, pp. 211-353.

[32] As Maguire noted, a panegyric of Photios compares Basil to David, see PG 102, col. 581, 584, as does the *Vita Basilii*, see Maguire, "The Art of Comparing in Byzantium," pp. 92-93. Ioli Kalavrezou found similar parallels drawn between Basil I and David and between Michael III and Saul in her work on the David and Saul imagery of the ninth and tenth centuries, and drew attention to the fact that the David Casket would be the first example of such a visual comparison to survive; see Kalavrezou, "A New Type of Icon: Ivories and Steatites," especially pp. 392-396. See also Brubaker's discussion on the visual and textual comparison between Basil I and David, Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, 6* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 185-193. Photios also compared David to co-rulers Michael III and Basil in his Homily XVIII celebrating the Council of 867 held under their joint rule, see Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 314-315.

[33] Papanastasiou argued that the casket was a work of the latter tenth century based on stylistic, epigraphic, and historical evidence. She argued that "both marriage and claim to power by an usurper are tightly interwoven in the images and inscriptions of the box," and that it is most likely that the emperor represented on the lid is John Tzimiskes and the casket commemorates Tzimiskes' marriage to Theodora in 970. While these suggestions are intreaguing, the parallels between the historical events and the iconography of the casket are not straight forward nor are they necessarily flattering for Tzimiskes. Papanastasiou argued that the David and Goliath imagery evokes Tzimiskes' murder of his predecessor, Nikephoros Phokas, that the marriage scene between David and Mikhal underscores how Tzimiskes legitimized his power by marrying Theodora, the sister of Romanos II (the emperor preceding Nikephoros Phokas), and that the scene showing David's escape in the basket makes reference to Theophano's (wife of Romanos II and later of Nikephoros Phokas, and ally of Tzimiskes) aid in Tzimiskes's murder, when she reportedly lowered a basket from the palace to allow entrance to the assassins. However, it is hard to imagine a bridal gift to an emperor that draws attention to an act of the woman with whom he was involved but ultimately not married (i.e. Theophano) prior to his marriage to the empress (Theodora) supposedly depicted on the lid of the casket. Furthermore, Tzimiskes married Theodora well after her father and brother were dead, thus the parallel between Saul giving his daughter in marriage to David, and the marriage of Tzimiskes is not quite satisfactory. And unlike Saul, Phokas was indeed mudered in his own bed. Moreover, Tzimiskes was from the high aristocracy, whearas the casket emphasizes the low birth of David. See Papanastasiou, "'. . . such a husband . . .'" I thank Areti Papanastasiou for generously sending me a copy of her talk. The identification of the imperial figures with Tzimiskes and Theodora was also suggested by Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," *Mélanges de*

Maguire's analysis focuses on the imagery that deals with the relationship of David and Saul, yet other scenes may be identified that serve as parallels to the life of Basil I. The childhood of David is not only included in the imagery because it fulfills a requirement of the imperial encomium as suggested by Maguire, but also because Basil I came from peasant stock. The imagery of David's childhood on the casket underscores that it is possible to rise from humble origins to imperial rank by the grace of god. The Life of Basil also attests that Basil's simple origin was emphasized, as inscribed on a mosaic in the Kainourgion in the thanksgiving offered by his children: "We thank Thee, O Word of God, that Thou hast raised our father from Davidic poverty and has anointed him with the unction of Thy Holy Ghost. Guard him and our mother by Thy hand, while deeming both them and ourselves worthy of Thy heavenly Kingdom."[34] Byzantine political thought subscribed to the notion that the emperor was an elect of god and the imperial power was not hereditary, despite the general practice of hereditary kingship. The notion that the emperor was supposed to be elected by the senate, army, and the Roman people served Basil, a man of lowly origins, well. Kazhdan and Wharton Epstein noted the important fact that the three texts associated with Basil I from the ninth-tenth centuries do not include noble origin as an essential requirement to become emperor.[35] The scene of David caressed by his father (Fig. 112) may also be compared to an event reported in the Life of Basil, which describes how the Bulgarian khan took Basil as a child into his lap and gave him a large apple. The khan recognized his imperial destiny from this encounter:

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l'École Française de Rome 83, no. 2 (1971): pp. 263-361, especially p. 282, no. 1, who also offered an alternative identification, Nikephoros Phokas and Theophano.

[34] Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 197-198, Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Basilio Macedone, ch. 89, p. 335. In other passages the *Vita Basilii* provides contradictory information about Basil's origins; in one paragraph it suggests that Basil came from the royal dynasty of the Armenian Arsacids on his father's side and from Alexander the Great and Constantine the Great on his mother's side, yet in another section it states that he derives from "a simple and common house." Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp, 215-216, 219. Also see, Speros Vryonis, "The Vita Basilii of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the Absorption of Armenians in Byzantine Society," in *Euphrosynon. Aphieroma ston Manole Chatzidake* (Athens: 1991), pp. 676-93, especially pp. 679-681.

[35] These are: the *Parainesis* written by Basil to his son Leo VI, the *Funeral Oration for Basil* written by Leo VI, and the *Vita Basilii* written by Constantine Porphyrogennetos, see Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, London, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 111.

> . . . the [the Bulgarian ruler] noticed Basil, as he behaved naturally as a child, laughing in a lovely manner and jumping around. He drew him to himself and gave him a wonderfully large apple. The boy set on the lap of the ruler innocently and bravely and showed in his unspoiled nature his innate nobility, so that the ruler was frightened and his body-guards became angry.[36]

Furthermore, the Life of Basil also reports that Basil wrestled and defeated a Bulgarian of enormous power while in the service of Theophilitzes at a banquet organized by the Caesar Bardas in the imperial palace.[37] This event finds its parallel in the David and Goliath imagery of the casket that occupies one full side of the box. Moreover, the scenes that depict Saul in his bed may also have been intended to forge a connection with the career of Basil, since he was the *parakoimomenos*, or bodyguard of the bedchamber[38] of Michael III before his elevation to the position of co-emperor.[39]

Romanos and Eudokia

The second, no less controversial imperial ivory is the Romanos Ivory preserved at the Bibliothèque National in Paris (Fig. 115).[40] It too depicts an imperial couple blessed by Christ. Emperor and empress stand on the two sides of a large, rectangular *suppedion* with almost frontal figures turned slightly towards Christ standing between

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[36] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , p. 217. This scene is depicted in the Madrid Skylitzes chronicle on f. 82r, see André Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid, Biblitothéque de l'Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines de Venise, n. 10* (Venice: 1979), p. 57, no. 201.

[37] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , p. 230. Illustrated in the Madrid Skylitzes, f. 85v, see Grabar and Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid* , p. 59, no. 208, fig. 89.

[38] For the dignity of parakoimomenos, see Aikaterine Christophilopoulou, *Byzantine History, 610-867*, trans. Timothy Cullen, vol. II (Amsterdam: 1993), p. 326.

[39] Hanson offered a different interpretation of the casket's imagery. He suggested that the rhetorical technique employed in the Palazzo Venezia casket should be identified as typology rather than encomium, John Hanson, "The Ivory Casket in Sens Known as La Sainte Châsse" (Ph.D., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1996), p. 174. This typology in his view served the propagation of the "doctrine of universal Byzantine authority" through a parallel drawn between the Byzantine emperor and the rule of divinely sanctioned kings, such as David, appropriating the figure of David as a predecessor of Byzantine rulers. Hanson also emphasized that the only Byzantine writers who discussed Old Testament narratives were historians, who wrote histories that ran from the creation of the world to their own time, see ibid., pp. 183-185. He argued that in the ninth and tenth centuries the position of the Byzantine Empire as universal power was contested through the rise of other powers both East and West, and that the notion of victory over foreign enemies was an important element of the understanding of the David story.

[40] The size of the plaque is 24.6 cm x 15.5 cm.

them. They lift their arms with open hands beseeching him, and hold no insignia of any kind. Christ stands on a triple-tiered *suppedion* placed in the middle of the imperial footstool. His frontal body inclines somewhat to his right towards the emperor while he places each hand on top of the crown of emperor and empress. His thumb appears in front of the central crown jewel while his palm and other fingers rest on top of the heads of the figures.[41] The three figures are rendered on identical scale. Romanos is dressed in the modified form of the *loros* introduced during the joint reign of Constantine VII and Romanos I, while Eudokia is clad in the *chlamys*.[42] Emperor and empress wear nearly identical crowns with pendilia and both have haloes. Three inscriptions arranged symmetrically above the heads of the imperial figures accompany the image: *IC XC, PωMANOC BACILEYC RωMAIωN, EVΔOKIA BACIΛIC PωMAIωN* (Jesus Christ, Romanos emperor of the Romans, Eudokia empress of the Romans). The faces, in particular those of the imperial couple, are significantly worn probably due to the frequent handling of the object.[43] Despite the worn quality of the surface, it is clear that Romanos is depicted clean-shaven. The identification of the imperial couple is controversial; some favor Romanos II and Eudokia from the tenth century, while others argue for Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa from the elevnth century.

The Romanos Ivory survives as a single arched plaque.[44] It is possible that the panel was originally produced as the central plaque of a triptych, yet no traces of hinges or shutters are detectable today.[45] Possibly the plaque originally designed as the central

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[41] For oblique views of the object that shows Christ's hands on top of the heads, see Anthony Cutler, *The Hand of the Master. Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9-11th centuries)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), figs. 22, 115.

[42] The modified form of the *loros* appears first on coins and seals of the co-emperors Constantine VII and Romanos I (920-944), see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 121; Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , nos. 66d, 70b-d.

[43] For a discussion of the handling of ivory objects and the resulting abrasions see Cutler, *The Hand of the Master. Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9-11th centuries)* , pp. 19-29.

[44] It was first discussed by J. J. Chifflet, *De linteis sepulcraliubs servatoris crisis historica* (Antwerp: 1624), p. 61, who mentions that the gospel book, into which it was inserted, was called *Sapphirum* and that it was a ceremonial book carried in procession and displayed during the liturgy. For its use, see A. Castan, "La premiere enteree des archeveques de Besancon sous l'ancien regime," *Memoires de la Société d'emulation du Doubs* (1875), pp. 207-218.

[45] Dalton and Gaborit-Chopin suggested that it could have been intended as part of a triptych, see Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* , p. 227, and Gaborit-Chopin's discussion in Jannic Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris: Bibliothèqe Nationale, Musée du Louvre, 1992),

part of a triptych was never actually assembled, or instead of hinges it was placed in a thin metal casing similar to the frame of the ivory panel with apostles assigned to the Romanos Group in Dresden, thus the metal casing could have included hinges for the wings (Fig. 120).[46] It is also possible that the panel was part of a series like the Dresden apostle plaque, although it is unclear how such a series of independent plaques would have been displayed.[47] Before 1805 the plaque was part of a western style cover for a gospel book of the church of St. John of Besancon (Fig. 116).[48]

The Romanos Ivory has a central role in the history of middle Byzantine ivory carving. Middle Byzantine ivories are notoriously difficult to date with any precision due to the lack of dateable inscriptions or contextual evidence. The dating of most pieces hinges on the dating of a handful of ivories, one of which is the Romanos Ivory, the eponymous piece of the so-called Romanos Group.[49] Its date, however, is controversial. The panel can be placed broadly between 944 and 1071, for this is the period in which two Byzantine imperial couples can be found with the names Romanos and Eudokia, namely Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia (944-949), and Romanos IV Diogenes and Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1068-1071). It is, however, not immediately obvious which couple is depicted on the panel. Romanos II was the only son and heir apparent of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. He married the illegitimate daughter of Hugh of Italy

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p. 233. Its shape and dimensions coincide with the shape and dimensions of central plaques of middle Byzantine triptychs; the size of the Romanos Ivory is 24.6 cm x 15.5 cm and 1.2 cm thick, the central plaque of the Crucifixion Triptych in Paris measures 25.2 x 14.25 cm, that of the Crucifixion Triptych in London 27.2 x 15.7 cm, and the Virgin panel (originally the central plaque of a triptych) in Utrecht is 25.6 x 13.6 cm. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, on the other hand speculated that the plaque could have been produced to be inserted into a book cover, see Adolf Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: 1979), p. 35.

[46] The apostles piece is found in the Grünes Gewölbe in Dresden, no. II 52, see: Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , no. 90, pp. 143-144.

[47] See Kalavrezou's comments on the Dresden apostle plaque and the series it belongs to, ibid. , p. 144.

[48] The gospel book is found in the Bibliothèque de Besancon, ms. 90, for a discussion of this manuscript, see *Catalogue général des manuscripts des bibliothèques publiques de France, Départments, Tome XXXII, Besancon, Tome I*, (Paris: 1897), pp. 53-54. For a picture of the book cover, see A. F. Gori, *Thesaurus veterum diptychorum consularum et ecclesiasticorum* (Florence: 1759), v. III, pl. I, p. 2-16. Goldschmidt-Weitzmann suggested that the metal casing of the book cover reproduced by Gori was most likely from the sixteenth century, see Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , p. 35. Chifflet mentions that the gospel book was called Sapphirum and that it was a ceremonial tome carried in procession and displayed during the liturgy. For its use, see Castan, "La premiere enteree des archeveques de Besancon sous l'ancien regime," , pp. 207-218.

[49] For a discussion of the Romanos Group, see Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , pp. 14-17.

in September 944, on which occasion the five-year old bridegroom wedded his four-year old bride.[50] Bertha-Eudokia died five years later, long before her husband came of age and became senior emperor. Romanos IV was the second husband of Eudokia Makrembolitissa, the widow of the previous emperor Constantine X Doukas, and they were in their thirties when the nuptial took place in 1068.[51]

From the late seventeenth century until the 1920s the imperial figures were identified as Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa as they were the only imperial couple to rule independently under the name of Romanos and Eudokia. Pierce and Tyler, however, challenged this attribution and suggested that the ivory in fact depicts Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia.[52] As Romanos II was crowned co-emperor during the reign of Constantine VII, they argued, such an iconography would be appropriate for the imperial heir and his bride,[53] moreover, the beardless face of the emperor would be more fitting for the representation of a child or a youth, which was the case with Romanos II who was only six years old at the time of his coronation, five at the time of his marriage, and ten at the time of the death of his bride.[54] Pierce and Tyler's re-dating of the ivory was followed by Goldschmidt and Weitzmann in 1934 who, however, revised their interpretation in 1978 acquiescing in Kalavrezou's arguments.[55]

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[50] Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, trans. ed. Gyula Moravcsik and trsl. Romili J. H. Jenkins, vol. I, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), p. 112; Liudprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. F. A. Wright (London: 1993), Antapodosis, V/20, p. 139; Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* De Romano Lacapeno, ch. 46, p. 431.

[51] Romanos IV was at least 37 years old in 1068, since Psellos reports that his father died in 1031, see Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," p. 607. Eudokia Makrembolitissa married her first husband, Constantine Doukas by 1049, assuming that she was at least 14 years old at the time of this marriage, she may have been born ca. 1035, therefore she was in her early thirties in 1068. For Eudokia, see ODB II, pp. 739-740.

[52] See Hayford Pierce and Royall Tyler, "Deux mouvements dans l'art byzantin du Xe siècle," *Arethuse* 16 (1927): pp. 129-36; Hayford Pierce and Royall Tyler, "Three Byzantine Works of Art: An Ivory of the Xth Century," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 2 (1941): pp. 11-18.

[53] Romanos II was crowned co-emperor on Easter day 945. For the marriage of Romanos II and Bertha see Liudprand, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings* , Antapodasis, V/20, p. 139.

[54] It is generally accepted as a rule of middle Byzantine imperial iconography that senior emperors are never depicted without a beard in Byzantine art, which symbolizes their mature status, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 110.

[55] Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , no. 34. For the revision see the Introduction, ibid., unnumbered pages; however, the discussion in the same corpus under no. 34 still argues for a tenth century date for the Romanos Ivory.

Kalavrezou argued forcefully that the Romanos Ivory should be linked with Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa based on figure style, iconography, and the imperial titles inscribed on the plaque.[56] Kalavrezou suggested that no images of brides of imperial heirs survive and that no representations exist depicting the coronation of the co-ruler in the absence of the senior emperor, concluding that the panel could not represent Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia.[57] She argued further that only sole rulers and regent empresses used the title *basilissa* officially, and proposed that basilissa is equal to or more important than the title Augusta. She further concluded that it was unlikely that Bertha-Eudokia was crowned Augusta and/or that she was permitted the use of the title *basilis romaion*, as there was only one Augusta in the court, and there is no evidence for the wife of the heir to be called Augusta or *basilis*.[58] Kalavrezou's arguments regarding titulature on the Romanos Ivory are based on the assumption that its inscriptions faithfully reflect official titulature, an unfounded assumption.[59] Bensammar noted that up to the 1060s the title basilissa was applied officially to independently ruling empresses, while later in the middle Byzantine period it referred to empress consorts and wives of co-emperors,[60] yet she noted that in un-official sources the term was used more freely to designate various types of imperial women, e.g. ruling empresses, imperial consorts, wives of co-rulers, and by the twelfth century even princesses.[61]

Most recently Cutler and Parani made a case for dating the Romanos Ivory to the tenth century.[62] Although Cutler argued that the dress of the emperor cannot be used as

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[56] Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977): pp. 305-25; for Cutler's critique of Kalavrezou's stylistic analysis, see Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," p. 608.

[57] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," p. 318.

[58] Ibid., pp. 309-310. Cutler, on the other hand suggested that Eudokia could have received the title *basilissa* after her marriage to Romanos, Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," , p. 606; also see Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," especially p. 21.

[59] Dölger demonstrated the discrepancy between inscriptions on works of art and in official titulature, see Dölger, "Die Entwicklund der byzantinischen Kaisertitulatur und die Datierung von Kaiserdarstellungen in der byzantinischen Kleinkunst," especially p. 151.

[60] Bensammar, "La titulature de l'impératrice et sa signification," pp. 271, 278.

[61] Ibid., pp. 270, 278-284 and Table I; also see Parani's comments on the title basilissa, Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," p. 20.

[62] See Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," and Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art." A tenth century date is also argued by Gaborit-Chopin, who proposed that since the book cover belonged to the so-called Carolingian

evidence for dating, as the introduction of the simplified *loros*, worn by Romanos, did not entirely supplant the original *loros* by the end of the eleventh century, Parani has shown that two features of Romanos's *loros* support a tenth century date: it lacks the circular collar typical on eleventh century representations of the simplified *loros*; and the cross decorating the lining of its train is characteristic of numismatic representations of the *loros* in the tenth century but is absent in the eleventh century.[63] Cutler identified Eudokia's garment as a *loros*, and noted that since it appears without the so-called *thorakion*, a greatly popular element of the empress's *loros* in the eleventh century, a tenth century date is more likely for the panel.[64] Cutler's analysis of the panel's epigraphy and ivy leaf ornament also supported a date in the tenth century.[65] Although Cutler misidentifies Eudokia's garment as a *loros*, he is right in suggesting that the empress' garment argues for a date in the tenth rather than in the eleventh century; Eudocia, in fact wears the *chlamys*, a garment not often depicted on representations of middle Byzantine empresses.[66] Parani noted that the distinction between emperor and empress through their dress (*loros* vs. *chlamys*) within the same image is unique among surviving artifacts, yet it is a device employed on coin and seal representations when

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type used until the end of the eleventh century, the ivory was more likely produced in the tenth than in the eleventh century, see Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , p. 233. The assumption is that it seems unlikely that an ivory manufactured ca. 1070 in Byzantium would find its way so quickly into the decoration of a Western book-cover that belonged to a type no longer produced after 1100.

[63] Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art;" the lining with the cross was also used by Gaborit-Chopin, in Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , p. 233 and Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," p. 281 to date the piece to the tenth century.

[64] However, one must note, that even though the *thorakion* became a customary element of the empress's attire in the eleventh century, on the Moscow reliquary of St. Demetrios Eudokia Makrembolitissa is shown in a *loros* without a *thorakion*, see Fig. 142.

[65] Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," especially pp. 609-610; also see, Anthony Cutler, "Inscriptions and Iconography on Some Middle Byzantine Ivories. The Monuments and their Dating." in *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio. Atti del Seminario di Erice (18-25 settembre 1988)*, ed. G. Cavallo, G. de Gregorio, and M. Maniaci (Spoleto: 1991), pp. 649-56.

[66] Rudt de Collenberg and Parani identified the empress's garment on the Romanos Ivory as *chlamys* as well, see Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," p. 282, no. 1 Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," , p. 18.The other surviving representations of middle Byzantine empresses in the *chlamys* are the portait of Theophano in Vatican gr. 1613 dating from ca. 1000 (Figs. 155-156), and Euphrosyne Doukaina's (1195-1203) representation on a seal, Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 111, pl. 28. There are also some images of Constantine and Helena from the middle Byzantine period where Helena is shown in the *chlamys*.

emperor (dressed in *loros*) and co-emperor (clad in *chlamys*) are shown together up to ca. 1025; thus the *loros* distinguished the more important figure while the *chlamys* was accorded to the less important personage.[67] Therefore, Parani concluded, the representation of the empress on the Romanos Ivory could not be Eudokia Makrembolitissa, as the historical evidence excludes the possibility that she would have been represented as the less important figure vis-à-vis her second husband, and suggested that Bertha-Eudokia was shown in the *chlamys* in order to distinguish her from the senior empress of the court.[68] Parani speculated that the Romanos Ivory was intended as a diplomatic gift to Eudokia's father, Hugh of Italy and may have been presented to him soon after Romanos' coronation in 945. The gift not only announced the coronation of Romanos but also reassured Hugh of the position of his daughter after Constantine VII took over the reign of the empire from Romanos I — who negotiated the marriage between Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia — in 945, and also reaffirmed the superior position of the Byzantine emperor in relation to the Italian king.[69] Parani's arguments about the meaning of the imperial dress and the intended recipient of the Romanos Ivory are intriguing, yet not fully convincing, as will be shown below.

The arguments advanced by art historians stack overwhelmingly in favor of dating the Romanos Ivory to the tenth century, and identifying the imperial couple as Romanos II and Bertha-Eudokia. Although this way the piece becomes unique among the surviving visual evidence, as it represents the only extant coronation/blessing of a junior emperor and his wife, the political circumstances of the mid-tenth century may explain this unique iconography. The production of the ivory took place during or immediately following the turbulent times when the usurper Romanos I was forced to leave office, and the legitimate heir, Constantine VII, slighted for decades, finally established his independent rule in 944. If the plaque was intended as a gift to the father of Bertha-Eudokia, as Parani argued, the production of the unique ivory could be easily

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[67] Parani, "The Romanos Ivory and the New Tokali Kilise: Imperial Costume as a Tool for Dating Byzantine Art," p. 20. As a counter example Parani cites the family coin of Theophilos, where Theophilos is dressed in the *chlamys* while his wife and daughters wear *loroi*, and also admits that on several representations of Constantine and Helena the imperial figures are distinguished by their dress.
[68] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[69] Ibid., pp. 23, 27, no. 75

explained by the political circumstances from which it emerged. However, even if the Romanos Ivory was not intended for Hugh of Italy, but was produced for use within the imperial court, it would not be surprising to find imagery that emphasized the importance of Constantine's son, Romanos II and affirmed his position as the legal heir apparent of the imperial throne, given that it took Constantine VII more than twenty years to gain sole power after the death of his father, Leo VI in 912. Presenting Romanos II with his young bride also articulated a clear line of succession expected from the union with Bertha-Eudokia.

The Romanos Ivory may be linked through iconography and ornamental detail with the so-called Cortona Reliquary that is securely dated to the reign of Nikephoros Phokas (963-969), thus about 20 years after the Romanos Ivory.[70] The Cortona Reliquary (Figs. 121-122) copiously employs the zigzag motif also found on the Romanos Ivory, suggesting a stylistic link between the two pieces.[71] The Cortona Reliquary also includes the representation of an imperial couple, this time Constantine the Great and his mother, Helena, shown with busts in two roundels in the lower register of the panel. Helena is dressed in the *loros*, while Constantine is shown in the *chlamys* and holding a cross, furnishing a roughly contemporary example where emperor and empress are distinguished by their dress. A further dateable panel, the Otto and Theophano ivory (982-983) shows a representation virtually identical to the Romanos Ivory, where Otto is represented in the *chlamys* and Theophano is shown in the simplified form of the *loros* (Fig. 123). The Otto and Theophano plaque shares stylistic similarities with the Cortona Reliquary and has been assigned to the same stylistic group by Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, although it was possibly not a Byzantine but a Western

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[70] Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , no. 77, pp. 48-49, and 18-20.

[71] Dalton also noted the stylistic connection between these two pieces, see Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* , p. 227. Although Goldschmidt and Weitzmann assigned the two ivories to two different stylistic groups, the Romanos Group and the Nikephoros Group, they suggested that works in the two groups were produced in the same period, see Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , pp. 15, 19. Cutler's stylistic analysis of other features of the ivory also linked the panel with tenth century pieces, see Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," , especially pp. 609-610 and Cutler, "Inscriptions and Iconography on Some Middle Byzantine Ivories. The Monuments and their Dating." Also see Guillou, "Deux ivoires Constantinopolitains datés du IXe et Xe siècle," especially pp. 209-211 for the Cortona Reliquary.

product.[72] Nevertheless, the Otto and Theophano plaque is clearly indebted to a Byzantine model, perhaps the Romanos Ivory, or a similar object. There are two further ivories containing representations of Constantine and Helena where the figures are shown in different imperial costumes, the Crucifixion triptych in Berlin and Paris, both belonging to the Romanos Group (Figs. 124-125).[73] On these triptychs Constantine is shown with the old-fashioned crossed *loros* while Helena is dressed in the *chlamys* with a jeweled collar. It appears that within this group of stylistically related objects, there is a tendency to differentiate the dress of imperial couples; on two occasions the emperor is shown in the *chlamys* while the empress sports the *loros*, whereas on the other examples the emperor is clad in the *loros* while the empress wears the *chlamys*.

The iconographic rules of coin imagery, used by Parani to establish the meaning of the differentiation of dress on the Romanos Ivory, appear to have different logic when the numismatic representations include images of empresses. Since the reign of Irene in the eighth century, empresses have been represented almost without exception in the *loros* on coins and seals throughout the middle Byzantine period.[74] When more than one empress is shown, no distinction is made through the dress regarding their position in the court hierarchy, although admittedly only two such coin issues survive, both belonging to the same family: the family coin of Theophilos from the 830s, which shows himself, his wife and three of their daughters, where all the women are clad in identical *loroi* while the emperor sports the *chlamys* (Fig. 38), and the coins of Theodora and Michael III (842-3), where Theodora and her daughter Thekla are shown in identical *loroi*, and

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[72] Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , no. 85; also see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , pp. 499-501, and Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , pp. 245-247.

[73] Goldschmidt and Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts* , no. 38, 39.

[74] Two exceptions may be found in the course of four centuries; on bronze coins and some seals Zoe Carbonopsina (early tenth century) is shown in the *chlamys* rather than the *loros* while her son Constantine VII is dressed in the *loros*, and Euphrosyne Doukaina (1195-1203) is shown in the *chlamys* on her seals. For coins of Zoe Carbonopsina, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pp. 559-560, pl. XXXVIII, and Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 62; for Euphrosyne's seal, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* , no. 111.

Michael is clad in the *chlamys* (Fig. 39).[75] Two examples of representations of several empress together come down to us in a lavishly illustrated manuscript of the chronicle of John Skylitzes, most likely produced in Sicily in the twelfth century. An image shows the above-mentioned daughters of Theophilos and Theodora where the empresses are shown in identical garments regardless of age and courtly position; another representation portrays empresses of the court of Constantine IX, again, without differentiating them through dress.[76]

In numismatic and sphragiastic imagery the *loros* appears to have emerged as a signifier of the empress' gender in the late eighth century. While Irene's selection of the *loros* had a complex message articulating her position in the court hierarchy and her imperial ideology,[77] later the *loros* appears to have become a traditional way to distinguish the emperor from the empress on the small face of a coin on such occasions when they were represented together.[78] (Even on coins and seals where the empress was represented alone, e.g. seals of Anastasia-Theophano or coins and seals of the purple-born Theodora, the empress donned the *loros*, according to established custom.) The concern to distinguish the gender of emperor and empress through different dress appears to have been present in other media at least until the tenth century, as the surviving imagery from the ninth and tenth centuries indicates that it was by no means an absolute

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[75] The different position between Theodora and her daughter is expressed through Theodora's placement on the obverse of the coin alone and the larger size of her bust. See Chapter III for a discussion of these coins.

[76] On f.44v and 227v, Grabar and Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid*, p. 41, no. 101, fig. 38; p. 117-118, no. 556, fig. 267.

[77] For an analysis of the message of Irene's coin imagery, see Chapter III.

[78] During most of the eighth century, the *loros* was the attribute of deceased imperial predecessors, as seen on the coinage of Constantine V and Leo IV, while the ruling emperors were consistently represented in the *chlamys*. In the early ninth century, from the reign of Nikephoros I through the reign of Theophilos, if both senior and junior emperors are depicted on the coin, they either both are shown in the *chlamys*, or the reigning emperor wears the *chlamys* while his junior partner is shown in the *loros*. The importance of the *loros* appears to shift during the reign of Theophilos on coin imagery, who is shown — after a hiatus of about a century — in the *loros* on his coins when he is represented alone, yet when he is shown with his son, Michael III, Theophilos wears the *chlamys* and Michael the *loros*. Michael III is also shown in the *loros* when he appears alone, yet when he is portrayed with his co-emperor, Basil I, they both appear in the *loros*. The consistent use of the *loros* for reigning emperors and the *chlamys* for junior emperors when they are shown together on coins begins in the reign of Basil I, however, the rule is not absolute, for instance, on the coins of Leo VI, when he is represented with his son, Constantine VII, they are both shown in the *loros*; on bronze coins of Romanos I and Constantine VII both figures are shown in the *loros*, and on the seals of Romanos I, Romanos, Constantine VII and Stephen are all shown in the *loros*. See appropriate sections of Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* and Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*.

rule that emperor and empress were both represented in the *loros*. While four surviving examples show imperial couples dressed in identical or nearly identical *loros* costumes: the imperial portraits of Paris gr. 510 (Figs. 133-134), the imperial couple shown on the lid of the David Casket (Fig. 110), the small gold issue of Basil I (Fig. 45), and the wall paintings at Çavuşin (Fig. 106), the above discussed ivories of the period indicate that it was also customary to distinguish emperor and empress by showing them in different attires. It appears that the pictorial rules for representing the dress of imperial couples were still in flux in the tenth century, and on some images the gender distinction between emperor and empress was expressed through different attires.[79] Therefore, it seems unlikely that the *chlamys* would suggest the meaning of junior empress on the Romanos Ivory, as suggested by Parani.[80]

The erosions on the faces of the three figures may supply clues about the use of the Romanos Ivory. The face of Christ is the least worn, more abraded is the visage of Romanos, and the most rubbed-off is the face of Bertha-Eudokia (Figs. 111-119).[81] Cutler suggested that the abrasions of the faces of the imperial figures may have resulted from the way the object — that he believed functioned as an icon — was held before it was inserted into the book-cover in the eleventh century, while the damage of the face of Christ might have been caused by devotional kissing, and he also proposed that the damage may have resulted from the handling of the gospel book during liturgical ceremonials after the eleventh century.[82] However, it seems unlikely that a gospel book

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[79] Perhaps it has to do with the fact that the *thorakion* has not yet been established as a necessary part of the female *loros*. See the comments of Rudt de Collenberg, who hypothetically links the introduction of the *thorakion* with Anastasia-Theophano or Theodora (wife of John Tzimiskes), see Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," pp. 282-284, no. 1.

[80] This meaning would be conceivable if one hypothesized that the Romanos Ivory originally was composed of at leas three leaves, which included a representation of the senior emperor and his wife dressed in *loros* costumes. This, however, cannot be proven. Another possibility may be suggested for the meaning of the *chlamys* on the image of Bertha-Eudokia, although this also remains a hypothesis. It is possible that after the coronation of Romanos II as co-emperor in 945 and before her death, Bertha-Eudokia was crowned empress, and that the choice of the *chlamys* would reflect this ceremonial, since empresses were invested with the *chlamys* during their coronation, see Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829), I, ch. 40, p. 203; Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* (Paris: 1935), II, ch. 49(40), p. 11.

[81] Cutler, *The Hand of the Master. Craftsmanship, Ivory, and Society in Byzantium (9-11th centuries)* , pp. 24-25, ibid fig. 22 illustrates the wear on the faces of the three figures. Cutler also noted that the flanks of the panel have been worn off.

[82] Cutler, "The Date and Significance of the Romanos Ivory," p. 605.

would be held in such a way that the faces of the imperial figures would be worn off by the handling, as the plaque was placed into a wide frame decorated with precious stones (Fig. 115).[83] The gospel book into which the Romanos Ivory was incorporated was one of the most precious objects of the archbishop's church in Besancon, carried regularly in religious processions and used during the inauguration of new archbishops at least from the thirteenth century. A thirteenth century text inscribed on the last page of the codex describes the archbishop's oath, which he took by resting his hand on the gospel book and on the reliquary of St. Ferreoli.[84] Yet, it is unlikely that such use would have eroded the three faces to such varying degree. Given that the faces of the imperial figures have been eroded the most, it is possible that this damage was accumulated while the Romanos Ivory was still in the private use of the imperial family. As Eudokia's face is the most damaged, one might imagine that the ten-year old widowed Romanos mournfully and repeatedly kissed the image of his deceased bride and possibly touched his own effigy, and he likely kept the image as a souvenir in his private possession, at least until his marriage to Theophano seven years later, in 956.[85] Further damage to the faces of the imperial figures and the face of Christ may have accumulated during the reuse of the ivory as a central plaque of a gospel book, as it is possible that the imperial

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[83] For the book-cover, see Gori, *Thesaurus veterum diptychorum consularum et ecclesiasticorum* , v. III, pl. I.

[84] "Et tunc dominus archiepiscupus Bisuntinus de novo creatus, antequam intret ecclesiam, debet jurare supra caput sancti Ferreoli et supra sancta Dei Euvangelia, libro tacto, omnia jura et privilegia, juriditiones, constitutions, libertates, consuetudines, cerimonias et statua ipsius Ecclesie Bisuntine, sue sponse, custodire, inviolabiliter observare, tener, defendere et tueri, bonaque ipsius Ecclesie conservare nec alienare, et alienata ad jus et proprietatem ejusdem pro posse revocare." See Castan, "La première entrée des archevêques de Besancon sous l'ancien régime," pp. 215-216.

[85] A poem expressing Romanos's loss upon the death of his young wife survives, see Spyridon Lampros, "Anekdotos monodia Romanou B. Epi tou thanato tes protes autou suzugou Berthas.," *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenique. Deltion Hellenikes Allelographias* 2 (1878): pp. 266-73. Although it is not impossible that the ivory was sent to Bertha-Eudokia's father in Italy, as suggested by Parani, it is unlikely that the damage — which indicates personal devotion to the imperial couple in the form of kissing or touching the faces — would have accumulated there, as Hugh of Italy died in 947, and Bertha's mother was a concubine, thus it seems improbable that she would have received the plaque after the death of Hugh. The use of imperial images as private souvenirs is documented by a poem of Theodore Prodromos, which recounts a painting of the emperor John Komnenos produced for his brother, Isaak: "I portray and depict you by the artist's hand, you whom I have engraved at the center of my heart, in order that I may always see you and be with you, and refresh and divert my desire, staring at the copy as if it were the original." Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982): pp. 123-81, especially p. 131.

figures were misunderstood as saints in the West and received devotional kissing during the liturgy.

The Iconography and Significance of the Double Coronation

The broader significance of the imperial images of the Romanos Ivory and the David Casket, sometimes referred to as double coronation scenes, has been interpreted variously. Most scholars agree that one of the chief aims of this iconography is the visual expression of the granting of imperial power through the act of coronation,[86] while others argue that the imagery does not necessarily signify a particular historical coronation but in a more general sense suggests Christ's benediction towards the imperial couple,[87] while still others maintain that this imagery highlights the idea of marriage.[88] Several further middle Byzantine images, a number of which are accompanied by texts, and two passages describing lost works show the same iconography[89] and help to shed light on the interpretation of the imagery.

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[86] André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936), p. 119. Kalavrezou argued, ". . . it can be shown that marriage is less important as a theme in these representations than the imperial legal status conferred by the coronation." Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," p. 315. Kalavrezou also proposed that imperial double coronation images were produced when there was some irregularity in the transition of power and thus the empress had an unusually significant role in the empire, ibid.

[87] See Magdalino and Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," p. 140.

[88] Wessel and Restle, eds., *Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst*, Kaiserbild, pp. 755-6; Christopher Walter, "Marriage Crowns in Byzantine Iconography," *Zograf* 10 (1979): pp. 1-17. Kalavrezou forcefully argued against this view in her 1977 article, pointing to several well-documented historical occasions where it is apparent that the double coronation imagery may not be linked with marriage, as in the case of the Otto and Theophano ivory, or the Moscow reliquary, see Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory." Further, Parani has shown that textual evidence suggests that the iconography of the double coronation scene cannot faithfully represent either the ceremonial of coronation or the imperial marriage, as the *Book of Ceremonies* clearly describes that the imperial couple was dressed in the *chlamys* during the coronation ceremonial, and it may be deduced, that they wore the same costume during the imperial wedding, see Maria G. Parani, "Byzantine Bridal Costume," in *Dorema. A Tribute to the A. G. Leventis Foundation on the Occasion of its 20th Anniversary* (Nicosia: 2000), pp. 185-216, especially p. 199. Yet it is noteworthy, that on the Romanos Ivory Eudokia appears in the *chlamys*; for a discussion of its significance, see below.

[89] 1: Otto and Theophano plaque, Cluny Museum, tenth century (Fig. 123); 2: medallion from the Khakhuli Triptych with two empresses (probably Zoe and Theodora) crowned/blessed by the Virgin, eleventh century (Fig. 139); 3: plaque from the Khakhuli Triptych with Michael VII and Maria blessed by Christ, eleventh century (Fig. 141); 4: f.1(2bis)r from the Coislin 79 with Nikephoros Botaniates (originally Michael VII) and Maria blessed by Christ, eleventh century (Fig. 163); 5: Moscow Reliquary with Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Constantine X, eleventh century (Fig. 142); 6: Sacra Parallela, Paris, Bibl. Nat. with

There are four images among the surviving double coronation scenes that are directly associated with the term coronation. The enamel plaque representing Michael VII and Maria of Alania crowned by a bust of Christ reaching out from a sky segment is inscribed with the following text: "I crown (*CTЄΦω*) Michael and Maria with my hands,"[90] a clear and direct statement of the divine source whence the power of both emperor and empress is derived (Fig. 141). A text associated most likely with the purple-born empress Zoe and her third husband, Constantine Monomachos describes a lost panel at the monastery church of St. Michael at Sosthenion. It states:

> Thy mighty hand, O Christ, has crowned (*εστεψε*) the mighty emperors and given them their kingdom; thy goodness has made them an inexhaustible fount of rich gifts. The entire earth is bounteously filled with these gifts and gives glory to thee, the giver of kingdom; she implores thee, the assister of kingdom, to be ever present, to fight along, to strengthen the emperors, to grant them long life and joy. In testimony thereof this image has been painted: for the monks of this venerable monastery of the First Angel at Sosthenion, having been favored with many rich gifts, give this reward to their kindly benefactors by artfully depicting thee, O Christ, in the act of crowning them (*στέφοντα*) here.[91]

Although this image does not survive, the text suggests that it showed the imperial couple with the so-called double coronation iconography. This passage clearly articulates that imperial power and authority, military might, a long and joyous life, as well as the various imperial virtues and good imperial deeds, and the overall bounty of the empire, are bestowed upon the imperial couple directly by Christ through the act of coronation. A similar idea is also expressed in a further text that accompanies a representation of the Virgin crowning Constantine X Doukas and his wife Eudokia Makrembolitissa in the company of their children in a manuscript of the *Sarca Parallela* preserved in the

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Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Romanos IV, eleventh century (Fig. 161); 7: coins and seals of Eudokia and Romanos, eleventh century (Fig. 75, 76); 8: the Urb. gr. 2 with Alexios and John Komnenos, twelfth century (Fig. 175); 9: Mauropous' poem describing a lost panel from the monastery of St. Michael at Sosthenion from the eleventh century, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 221; 10: twelfth century text describing an image of Manuel and Maria most likely both blessed by Christ, see Magdalino and Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," pp. 138-140.

[90] For the translation, see Ioannis Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," *Cahiers Archeologiques* 23 (1974): pp. 97-105, especially p. 109.

[91] Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , p. 221, for the Greek text of Mauropous, see PG, CXX, 1179. For a discussion of this text, see Chapter IV.

Bibliothèque National in Paris (Fig. 161).[92] The text on f.5v faces the imperial miniature of the next page, f.6r. Although the image shows the Virgin crowning/blessing the imperial couple, the text attributes the gifts received by emperor and empress to the benevolence of Christ, who is represented in a medallion directly above the head of the Virgin:

> Christ having come across conjugal love, / has bestowed on you the glory of wielding the scepter,/ this heavenly initiative and fundament, / incomparable and strange to understand; ... For this reason you are now adorned with the crown of power (*στέφει νυν ωραίζεσθε κράτους*) / in all the hymns and holy books, / together with the children, resplendent in the crown (*Σύν τοις καταστράπτουσι παισι τω στέφει*), / the light-bearing branches of the purple.[93]

Here the divine source of imperial power is underscored again, but in addition the statement also has a dynastic underpinning, as the imperial children are presented as divinely endowed heirs of their father's dominion. Another lost image, which likely used the double coronation iconography, is described in a poem from ca. 1161 and showed Manuel and his wife, Maria of Antioch blessed by Christ:

> On an icon which has the emperor represented, and the empress blessed (*ευλογουμενην*) by Christ
>
> ... John, priest of God the Word, of the family of Chrysophorites, although low and insignificant in his lot, showing the affection mixed with loyalty, which he bears towards the emperor Manuel, the purple-hued pillar of the New Rome, slavishly portrays him in colors. He also portrays the empress Maria, who formerly held sway over the land of Antioch, and now through him (Manuel) of every world orbit. Containing his emotion in voiceless representations, he depicts those whom the Pantokrator, ruler of earth and heaven, has joined decorously and splendidly in one bed and one crown (*ϛυνηψε εισ εν και λεχωϛ και στεφοϛ*). He wishes that the days of their throne may be as many as David, in the psalm, numbers the days of heaven: that the Porphyra may blossom in swaddling clothes with a son for them, like a rose from a garden; and that the crown may find inheritance from him, when in ripe old age they leave their power.[94]

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[92] For a discussion of this image, see Chapter VII.
[93] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , 103-104; see Appendix B, no. 4.
[94] Marcianus gr. Z 524, f. 107; see Magdalino and Nelson, "The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century," pp. 138-140.

Although the title of the poem only refers to the action of Christ with the general term blessing, the author fully elaborates what specific blessings are meant later in the text. In fact, it is clear that both the marriage and the coronation of this imperial couple are presented as actions of Christ, a divinely sanctioned marital union and imperial elevation. Although the future blessings, such as the long reign and a purple-born son are described as wishes of the patron on behalf the imperial couple, these are also manifestations of the blessings to be received from Christ.

Two images with the double coronation iconography are associated with the term blessing (*ευλογων*). The lid of the David Casket states: "O Christ bless the imperial couple; the couple, your servants, duly make obeisance to you" (Fig. 110). The request of blessing remains unspecified on the lid of the box, yet the continuation of the text encircling the casket spells out what is meant by it: the virtues of the soul of the emperor and the beauty of the body of the empress are presented as divine gifts: "Your soul, o emperor, is a treasury of sublime gifts and a vessel [full] of divine goods. But also your body, o empress [is] a treasure of marvelous qualities [ ] such a husband [ ]."[95] Finally, a full page miniature on f.1(2bis)v of the Coislin 79 shows Nikephoros Botaniates and Maria of Alania blessed by a bust of Christ (Fig. 163). The following text is inscribed on this page: "May Christ protect you, king of Rome, by blessing you (*ευλογων*) together with the most noble queen."[96] The text suggests that Christ's blessing provides protection of the emperor and his wife.[97]

Double coronation scenes are symbolic representations that lack specific documentary details beyond the accurate representation of imperial regalia.[98] The

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[95] Cutler and Oikonomides, "An Imperial Byzantine Casket and Its Fate at a Humanist's Hand," pp. 82-83. The rhetoric of this passage is rather similar to that of the Mauropous poem describing the lost panel of Zoe and Monomachos from the 11th century, see above.

[96] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 108. Originally the miniature depicted Maria's first husband, Michael VII, but his features have been repainted to reflect the age of Maria's second spouse, Nikephoros Botaniates; at the same time new inscriptions were added to the miniatures.

[97] Presumably the protection asked from Christ on behalf of the emperor and empress parallels and justifies the favor and support the scribe seeks through his gift, as for instance is stated on f.2v: ". . . the author [St. John Chrysostom, whose homilies the manuscript contains], stands in entreaty asking with us your goodwill for the scribe: may you favor and support him, oh King." For the original and translation, see Ibid. , p. 112.

[98] A more documentary approach may be noted in illustrations found in chronicles, such as the Madrid Skylitzes, which includes representations of marriages as well as coronations, where more visual

iconography is left intentionally vague, and it combines elements that evoke visually (or visually and textually) different events, ceremonials or notions, such as wedding and marriage, marital concord, coronation, divine election and protection. Accordingly, this type of image may take on a series of meanings depending on the circumstances of its use, as demonstrated by the examples above. Double coronation images should not be identified as images of marriage or coronation, as they clearly do not have documentary accuracy in representing actual marriage or coronation scenes.[99] Yet, under specific circumstances they may be used as symbolic representations commemorating either of these events, or may be employed to signify in general terms the unity of the imperial couple and need not be associated with a specific historical event or moment. Double coronation scenes present clearly and directly ideas that imperial ceremonials cannot represent or enact directly, as for instance the divine election and elevation of the emperor. Thus they show a symbolic visual universe that complements and heightens the significance and meaning of historical events and circumstances with which they are associated.

This imagery highlights the importance of the empress in Byzantium by showing her with divinely sanctioned power and authority that equals that of the emperor. The iconography suggests that Byzantine imperial power is exercised by an orthodox couple joined through marriage rather than by a single individual, clearly elevating the empress above the position she was actually accorded in law, political theory and practice.[100] A comparison of two pages from the Coislin 79, that originally represented Michael VII and Maria, but was later retouched and re-inscribed to show Nikephoros Botaniates and Maria, brings into clear focus the type of message articulated through the double

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information is given about the circumstances of the specific events. For the Skylitzes manuscript and its illustrations, see Grabar and Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid*.

[99] It may also be noted, that emperor and empress are never elevated to the throne together during the same ceremony – even if their elevation happens at the same time, they are crowned at different locations, the emperor in Hagia Sophia while the empress in one of the churches inside the palace.

[100] However, similar ideas about the empress were expressed in acclamations during imperial ceremonials, as for instance shown by the following passage chanted during the coronation of an empress: "Be welcome, empress, elevated by god. ... Be welcome, empress, protected by god. . . . Be welcome, you, nobility of the purple. . . . Welcome, you, desire of all. . . . Be welcome, you . . . who were elevated by divine election for the strengthening and exaltation of the world, you, whom god married to the purple. The Almighty god blessed you and crowned you with his own hand." Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, Book I, ch. 39, p. 198; Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, II, ch. 48(39), p. 7.

coronation imagery. F.2r shows the monumental figure of the emperor enthroned on a magnificent lyre-backed throne behind which two elegant young women appear, personifications of his virtues, Truth and Justice (Fig. 164). Two courtiers, identified as high officials of the imperial bureaucracy, shown on a much smaller scale stand on each side of the emperor.[101] Although the image is highly conceptual, the representation of the imperial throne and the podium of the officials evokes an actual physical environment and its spatial and hierarchical relationships, albeit in abstract terms. In contrast, the double coronation image on f.1(2bis)v of the same manuscript shows the imperial couple in a completely abstract space, where even the customary footstools under the feet of the figures are missing (Fig. 163). The figures appear in front of gold background suspended in space with the incomplete half figure of Christ hovering above their head.[102] The two images visualize two different and on occasion competing hierarchies that lived side-by-side in Byzantine imperial practice and ideology: the actual and legally endorsed political hierarchy of the imperial court where the emperor presided over his high officials and courtiers; and the other, accepted, but legally not defined hierarchy of imperial blood and dynasty in which the empress had a pivotal role as consort and mother of the intended heir.[103]

Conclusion

This chapter analyzed two extant Byzantine ivories with representations of empresses, the David Casket and the Romanos Ivory. It argued that the David Casket can be linked most convincingly with Basil I in the second half of the ninth century and

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[101] From the viewer's left to right, the four courtiers are: 1. *proedros and epi tou kanikleiou* (keeper of the imperial inkstand); 2. *protoproedros and protovestiarios;* 3. *proedros and dekanos;* 4. *proedros and megas primikerios*; see Maguire's essay in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 185.

[102] Although the texture of the gold leaf covering the folio does give a physical dimension to the space they inhabit, this appears to be the result of the later crumpling of the pages.

[103] Dagron noted the importance of the empress in continuing the imperial line: ". . . according to the physiological conceptions of the age, it was they [i.e. women] who transmitted the blood." Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 41. It is possible that several of these images were produced in situations where the transmission of power was irregular, as Kalavrezou suggested, but this need not necessarily be the case, see Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory."

elaborated on previous observations about the biographical references contained in the David cycle of the casket. The analysis of the visual evidence confirmed the tenth century date of the Romanos Ivory, and it was suggested that this piece might have been used as a personal memorial by the young Romanos. An exploration of the imagery of the double coronation offered an interpretation of this pervasive iconographic type of middle Byzantine imperial art. It suggested that the imagery had an intentionally vague visual language whose meaning could be specified by the particular circumstances of its use and by the texts frequently accompanying such representations.

CHAPTER VI: THE EMPRESS ON METAL-WORKS

The handful extant enamel and metal-works containing representations of middle Byzantine empresses all date to the eleventh century. They are linked in various ways with each other stylistically, but regrettably most of these objects come down to us in incomplete form, without the visual context in which they originated.

Enamel Effigies of Zoe and Theodora

A small round plaque representing the empress Zoe survives in the treasury of the church of San Marco in Venice (Fig. 126). It shows the bust of the empress Zoe with the inscription, Zoe Augusta. She is dressed in the *loros* costume and holds a red scroll-like object, the *akakia*, in her left hand while lifts her right hand in front of her chest.[1] Zoe's crown is simple with a wide gold band decorated with a dark square stone and four pearls and is topped by five triangular projections. Two pearls are placed on the left and right temple of the empress at the bottom of the crown, yet no pendilia are shown. Dark brown hair frames her face and two, narrow locks fall over her shoulder, similarly to her representation on f.3r of Sinai gr. 364 (Fig. 160), where she appears together with her husband and her sister.[2] Her crown bears similarity to the crown of Theodora on the Sinai gr. 364 page, although the enamel representation is a simplified version of Theodora's crown. The empress's face is framed by a blue halo outlined in red, and she gazes to her right. On no other extant representation is Zoe shown with the *akakia* in her hand; on the Sinai manuscript and the Monomachos Crown (Fig. 127) it is the emperor who holds the *akakia*, while the empresses are given scepters, whereas on coins and seals Zoe is shown either with the labarum, a scepter, and/or a globe. One wonders if the artist gave Zoe the *akakia*, usually held by the emperor, because she appeared without other

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[1] Diameter: 3.2 cm. See Magda. Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* (Budapest: 1937), p. 27, who dates the piece to the eleventh century; H. R. (ed.) Hahnloser, *Il Tesoro di San Marco. Il Tesoro e il Museo* (Florence: 1970), no. 100; Ferdinando Ongania, *Il tesoro di San Marco in Venezia* (Venezia: 1886), p. 84.

[2] Comparable hairstyle also characterizes the representations of Maria of Alania in the Coislin 79 and on the Khakhuli plaque. The rendering of Zoe's *loros* with the pearls hanging from the fringe of the collar of the *loros* is also similar to the representation of the *loros* of Maria of Alania on the Kakhuli panel.

imperial colleagues on the object that this small plaque adorned. The plaque most likely was part of a series decorating perhaps a votive crown, similar to the crown of Leo VI, or some other object, such as a ceremonial chalice, a book-cover, an icon cover.[3]

Zoe reappears together with her husband, Constantine Monomachos (1042-55) and her sister Theodora in the company of two female personifications, Truth and Humility, and two dancing girls on the so-called Monomachos Crown made of gold and cloisonné enamel (Fig. 127).[4] This series of plaques is unique among surviving imperial representations in several respects: it shows the imperial figures in a stylized garden-like environment amongst vine branches inhabited by colorful birds; unlike in most middle Byzantine representations, emperor and empresses are not accompanied by holy figures; and the imperial triad is attended by vigorously moving female dancers.

The plaques survive as a series of independent arched panels of varying sizes.[5] The three largest show the imperial triad, Constantine Monomachos, Zoe, and Theodora

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[3] Bárány-Oberschall suggested that it may have decorated a gospel cover or a cross offered by Zoe to a church, see Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , p. 27.

[4] Hungarian National Museum 99/1860. Dancing girls - 10x4.5, personifications - 9.8x4.5. First published by J. Érdy, "Nyitra Ivánka területén 1860 és 1861 éven kiszántott byzanti zománcok, a XI századból," *Archeológiai közlemények* III (1861): pp. 65-78. Also see N. Kondakov, *Geschichte und Denkmäler des byzantinischen Emails* (Frankfurt: 1892), pp. 243-249; Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* ; Josef Deér, "Mittelalterliche Frauenkronen in Ost und West," in *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatsymbolik*, ed. Percy Ernst Schramm (Stuttgart: 1955), 418-49, pl. pp. 46-53, especially pp. 433-449; Sándor Mihalik, "Problematik der Rekonstruktion der Monomachos-Krone," *Acta Historiae Artium* IX, no. 3-4 (1963): pp. 199-243; Géza de Franchovich, "Il concetto della regalità nell'arte sassanide e l'interpretazione di due opere d'arte bizantine del periodo della dinastia macedone: la cassetta eburnea di Troyes e la corona di Constantino Monomaco di Budapest," *Arte Lombarda* 9 (1964); Zoltán Kádár, "Reconstitution de la couronne de l'empereur Constantin Monomaque," *Folia Archaeologica* XVI (1964): pp. 113-24; Klaus Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* (New York Greenwich, Connecticut: 1967), pp. 98-106; Maguire in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 210-212; Henry Maguire, "Davidic Virtue: The Crown of Constantine Monomachos and its Images," *Jewish Art* 23-24 (1997-1998): pp. 117-23. Oikonomides recently suggested that the Monomachos Crown was a nineteenth century fake, see Nicolas Oikonomides, "La courenne dite de Constantine Monomaque," *Travaux et Mémoires* 12 (1994): pp. 241-62. His arguments have been systematically analyzed and challenged by Kiss, who convincingly argued that the Monomachos Crown was indeed an authentic work of the eleventh century Byzantium, see Etele Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)," *Folia Archaeologica* XLVI (1997): pp. 125-64; the same article was also published in English Etele Kiss, "The State of Research on the Monomachos Crown and Some Further Thoughts," in *Perceptions of Byzantium and Its Neighbors, 843-1261*, ed. Olenka Plevny (New York, New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Yale Univeristy Press, 2000), pp. 60-83.

[5] They were found together with other pieces: roundels of the apostles Andrew and Peter (3 cm in diameter), and a rectangular gold setting for a precious stone (1.7 x 1.5 cm). For the apostle medallions, see Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , pp. 10-11, 38-39. For the circumstance of the treasure's discovery and sell to

standing on *suppedia* and clad in similar blue robes adorned with yellow heart-shaped motifs over which they wear the male and female versions of the *loros* decorated almost identically except for the *thorakion* worn by the empresses (Figs. 128-130).[6] Emperor and empresses have nearly identical narrow crowns with a central arched jewel in the middle and two smaller, rectangular stones on the two sides; the emperor's crown is topped by three pearls, one in the middle and one on each side, while the empresses' crowns are terminated by a tri-lobe motif in the center and small triangular projections and pearls on the sides. Identical pearl pendilia frame their faces and they have similar black curly hair. The emperor carries a *labarum* in his right hand and a white scroll tied with two red ribbons, the *akakia* in his left, while the empresses hold long scepters in one hand and lift their other hand in front of their bosom. Zoe and Theodora are mirror images of one another, their *thorakia* are oriented in different directions and their glances are directed off to the side. Highly stylized vine branches inhabited by six birds surround each figure, evoking a luxurious, lush environment. Inscriptions identify the figures as "Constantine Monomachos, *autokrator* of the Romans," "Zoe, the most pious Augusta," and "Theodora, the most pious Augusta."[7]

The next two panels show elegantly dressed dancing girls amongst vine branches populated by four birds (Figs. 131-132).[8] They are portrayed in similar positions, stepping forward with their right leg and kicking back their left leg as they bend their knees while their arms lift up long narrow scarves above their heads.[9] One faces forward, while the other turns her head back. They have round faces and dark curly hair bound

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the Hungarian National Museum, see Mihalik, "Problematik der Rekonstruktion der Monomachos-Krone," pp. 199-204, who believes that several pieces of the original find may have been sold to different buyers and that the treasure could have been composed of more pieces; also see Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)," pp. 128-129.

[6] Sizes of three plaques: Constantine - 11,5x5cm, Zoe - 10.5x4.8, Theodora - 10.7x4.8, see Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)*, pp. 5, 7.

[7] *KωNCTANTINOC AVTOKPATO ROMЄON O MONOMAXOC; ZώH OI EYCAIBAICTATH AVTovCTA; ΘЄOΔώPA H EYCAIBAICTATI AVTovCTA*, see Moravcsik's essay in ibid., p. 44. For a discussion of the inscriptions, also see Oikonomides, "La courenne dite de Constantine Monomaque."

[8] The size of these plaques: 10 cm x 4.5 cm (girl in green tunic), and 9.8 cm x 4.5 cm (girl in white tunic), see Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)*, p. 8.

[9] In fact the representation of the upper parts of their bodies are virtually mirror images of one another.

with fillets, and their heads are surrounded by haloes. They are clad in dresses of identical design - long, narrow-sleeved, tight-fitting tunics of waist length, and long narrow skirts - but of different color and fabric: one has a green tunic decorated with heart-shapes and pearls, and a blue skirt rendered with gold folds, and her halo is green; the other wears a white tunic with gold folds and has a blue skirt with heart shapes and pearls, her halo is blue.

The last tow panels show two female personifications, Aletheia and Tapeinosis standing between short cypress trees with pairs of birds perching on their branches (Figs. 134-135).[10] They have similar round faces as seen on the previous plaques framed by dark curly hair held in place by fillets; Aletheia has a blue, Tapeinosis a green halo. Aletheia is turned slightly to her right, she lifts her right hand towards her mouth, turns her head slightly to the right, and holds a cross in her left hand in front of her torso. Tapeinosis stands frontally but turns her head to her left and crosses her arms in front of her chest. The figures are nearly mirror images of one another, and wear dresses of identical design but of different color and fabric. Aletheia wears a waist-length red *chiton* with tight sleeves and adorned with heart-shaped motifs and a blue skirt rendered with gold folds; Tapeinosis is dressed in a blue *chiton* shown with gold folds and a green skirt peppered with heart-shaped motifs and pearls.

As the treasure is comprised of a series of independent panels, various suggestions have been made about the function of the original object and its reconstruction. Bock imagined that the plaques were placed in ornamental frames and formed a small round diadem.[11] Kondakov proposed that the plaques perhaps decorated a *maniakion*, while Ebersolt suggested that they might have formed a votive crown of some

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[10] The size of the plaques is 8.7 x 4.2 cm. They are inscribed: *Η ΤΑΠΙΝΟCIC; Η ΑΛΙΘΗΑ*, see Moravcsik's essay in Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , p. 44. For good color illustrations, see Anthony Cutler and Jean-Michel Spieser, *Das mittelalterliche Byzanz, 725-1204, Universum der Kunst* (Munich: 1996), fig. 265, 266.

[11] Franz Bock, *Das ungarische National Museum, Mitteilungen der K. und K. Centralkomission* (1867), p. 85 or see F. Bock, *Die Kleinodien des Heil.-Römischen Reiches* (1864), pp. 180-184. For a reproduction of his reconstruction, see H. P. Mitchell, "A Dancing-girl in Byzantine Enamel," *Burlington Magazine* 40 (1922): pp. 64-69, especially p. 64.

kind.[12] Bárány-Oberschall argued that the panels should be reconstructed similarly to the two Kievan diadems (Fig. 136) from the eleventh century with the plaques only adorning the front of the diadem, and hypothesized that the panels were linked through posts and tied in the back with a ribbon or gold chain, and that they carried pearls on top and pendilia on the sides. She emphasized that it could not have been an imperial crown, since an emperor would not wear a representation of himself on his crown, and suggested that it was used either by a high official of the Byzantine court or was sent as a diplomatic gift to a foreign ruler.[13] Mihalik assumed that the surviving evidence is incomplete and that the apostle medallions were part of the original object, and conjectured several missing plaques for his reconstruction of a full crown.[14] In his view, the crown would have included an image of Christ at the front,[15] the imperial triad at the back, [16] an image of the Virgin,[17] four or five dancing girls,[18] Aletheia, Tapeinosis, and one or two further personifications.[19] Kádár offered a different reconstruction. He also believed that the surviving series is incomplete and reconstructed an impressive two-tiered crown including numerous hypothetical plaques. The lower tier showed the imperial triad at the front and three dancing girls in the back,[20] while at the front of the upper tier the enthroned Christ appeared flanked by the medallions of the two apostles (Peter and a hypothetical apostle) who were in turn flanked by Aletheia and Tapeinosis; the back showed a similar composition with the enthroned David flanked by Andrew and

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[12] Jean Ebersolt, *Les arts somptuaires de Byzance* (Paris: 1923), p. 99, no. 1. Kondakov, *Geschichte und Denkmäler des byzantinischen Emails* , p. 244.

[13] Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , pp. 34-35; she drew attention to the similarity in size between the Monomachos Crown and the Kievan diadems as well as the similar rims soldered to the back of the Kievan diadems, ibid p. 33.

[14] Mihalik dated the apostle plaques to the tenth century, see Mihalik, "Problematik der Rekonstruktion der Monomachos-Krone," p. 205.

[15] See Ibid., p. 217 and p. 223; he argues that there must have been a figure of Christ included as no crowns of the eleventh century survive without a representation of Christ.

[16] Ibid., p. 223.

[17] Ibid., p. 224; however, he did not suggest a location for the plaque with the Virgin.

[18] Ibid., p. 222; he accepted the London dancing girl plaque as authentic.

[19] See Ibid., pp. 225. For a critique of Mihalik's reconstruction, see Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* , p. 102.

[20] He included the third dancing girl panel from the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has been dismissed by Bárány-Oberschall as a fake.

another apostle, and framed by Prophetia and Sophia.[21] While convincingly rejecting the reconstructions of Mihalik and Kádár, Wessel proposed that two more plaques decorated with allegorical figures or with ornaments may have been part of the original object and tentatively floated the unlikely idea that possibly two crowns may be reconstructed from the surviving panels, one male and one female crown.[22]

Given that the panels are slightly bent backwards and have narrow rims soldered to their backs that are punctured with small holes at irregular intervals probably in order to attach them to a backing of some kind (Fig. 137),[23] Kiss suggested that the plaques were sewn onto textile backing and formed a crown, similar in appearance to a crown worn by the ninth century empress Theodora on an illumination on f.50v in the Skylitzes manuscript and also similar to twelfth century diadems found in Kiev (Fig. 136).[24] While Maguire accepts the possibility that the plaques formed a diadem as suggested by Bárány-Oberschall and Kiss, he also proposed that they could have been assembled as an elaborately decorated belt of some kind.[25]

It appears unlikely that any more plaques would have belonged to the set of enamels that formed the original object, now called the Monomachos Crown. They appear to make up a complete series in their current state; the gradation of the plaque sizes argues for an intact group, as do the symmetrical arrangement of the various figures

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[21] See Kádár, "Reconstitution de la couronne de l'empereur Constantin Monomaque," pp. 121-123. For a critique of Kádár's reconstruction, see Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* , p. 103.

[22] Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* , p. 103. What is now considered the Monomachos Crown would have been in his view the female crown, while the Dancing Girl plaque at the Victoria and Albert Museum — which has been considered to be a fake by many scholars — would be the only remnant of the male crown.

[23] For a discussion of the holes and the plaques' attachment to a backing, see Maguire in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 210. Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , pls. III-IX reproduce the back views of the plaques, although the holes along the rims are not clearly visible. Some of the holes are visible on Figs. 145 in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , where the slight bend of the panels is also perceptible. The backs of the apostle medallions do not have rims and they appear to have been attached rather crudely to the original object they decorated, as they have been punched through by four holes, see Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , pl. IX, 1b and X, 1b.

[24] Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)," p. 130.

[25] Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 210.

with three nearly mirror image pairs flanking the central figure of the emperor, and the rhythmically balanced use of color on the haloes and dresses of the various figures. Moreover, the soldered rims with the punctured holes on the back of the plaques also make it clear that the panels were not placed in metal frames but were sewn onto some kind of a backing. Considering these technical and visual characteristics, the reconstructions of Bock, Mihalik, Kádár, and Wessel can be dismissed. It is, however, more difficult, if not impossible, to establish with certainty, whether the original object indeed was a diadem or crown intended for actual use or dedicated as a votive gift, or if the plaques served as decorations of an official's robe or ceremonial belt.

Most scholars agree that the plaques were produced in the capital, either in a palace workshop or in a workshop in Constantinople.[26] It is, however, unclear how and when the pieces arrived to Hungary. The suggestion that the Crown of Monomachos may have arrived to Hungary as a diplomatic gift intended for the Hungarian king, Andrew I (1046-160) was suggested soon after its discovery and has persisted in the scholarship.[27] While Bárány-Oberschall accepted this possibility, she also suggested that the crown might have arrived to Hungary after the plunder of Constantinople in 1204.[28] Bogyay, slightly modifying Linnas' thesis proposed that the crown was sent to Anastasia,

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[26] Both Bárány-Oberschall and Deér argued that the crown was made in a palace workshop, Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)*, p. 11; Deér, "Mittelalterliche Frauenkronen in Ost und West," p. 435; while Kiss suggested that even if it was not made in the palace workshop, it most likely was commissioned by a member of the court and produced in a workshop in Constantinople, see Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)," p. 153.

[27] First proposed by Charles de Linnas, *Histoire du travail a l'exposition universelle de 1867* (Paris: 1868), pp. 121-125. See for instance Mihalik, "Problematik der Rekonstruktion der Monomachos-Krone," p. 236; Robin Cormack, "But is it Art?," in *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot, Hampshire, and London: 1992), pp. 231-236. Andrew I had connection with the East, as he grew up in the court of Yaroslaw in Kiev between 1034-1046, and was an Orthodox Christian, and married the daughter of Yaroslaw, Anastasia. Although, Andrew was elevated to the Hungarian throne after king Peter (1038-41 and 1044-46) — who was strongly allied with the Western Roman Emperor, Henry III — was dethroned and blinded, his political orientation remained cautious between the East and the West and cultivated ties both with the Holy Roman Empire and Byzantium. See Iván Bertényi, *Szent István és öröksége (Saint Stephen and his Heritage)* (Budapest: 1997), pp. 24-30; and Zoltán Kosztolnyik, "The Monomachos Crown," *Chronica. Annual of the History Institute of the University of Szeged* (2001): pp. 29-43.

[28] Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)*, p. 42.

the wife of Andrew I, rather than the king himself.[29] Kiss argued that the crown most likely arrived to Hungary during the eleventh century, by drawing attention to the geo-political importance of Nyitraivánka (currently in Slovakia) in Hungarian politics of the eleventh century, and the eight coins of Monomachos found by archaeologists in the region of Nyitra. Kiss, however, emphasized, that Andrew I should not necessarily be identified as the recipient of the crown, and suggested that it may have arrived to Hungary with Judith, wife of the Hungarian King Salamon and daughter of the Western Roman emperor Henry III, since a diplomatic exchange was recorded for the year 1049 between Monomachos and Henry III (1039-1056).[30] This evidence, however, does not prove beyond doubt that the Monomachos Crown was sent to a Hungarian king or that it was in Hungary during the eleventh century.

A stylistic curiosity characterizes the figures represented on the Monomachos Crown. They are shown with emphatic sidelong glances and none gaze forward. This feature has posed particular difficulties in the understanding of the relationships between the three imperial figures, as Constantine Monomachos and his wife Zoe look to their left, while Zoe's sister, Theodora looks to her right. The imperial triad may be reconstructed in two ways. First, Zoe standing on Constantine's right in the privileged position and Theodora on his left, in keeping with the protocol of the court[31] and the other surviving representation of the same trio in Sinai gr. 364 (Fig. 160), yet in this case Constantine looks away from his wife in the direction of his sister-in-law; second, Theodora may be placed on Constantine's right – as is the case on the current reconstruction –, thus Theodora faces away from her imperial partners, while Constantine looks in Zoe's direction and Zoe looks in the direction of his glance, away from him.

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[29] Thomas Bogyay, "Reveiw of Moravcsik, Byzance et le people hongrois," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 48 (1955): p. 392. Grabar also expressed the view that the Monomachos Crown was intended as a crown for a woman because of the selection of virtues that in his view are associated with women, see André Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," in *L'art de la fin de l'Antiquite et du Moyen -Age,* (1968), pp. 265-90, especially p. 277.

[30] Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)," pp. 129-130. For a discussion of the politics of mid-eleventh century Hungary, see Kosztolnyik, "The Monomachos Crown."

[31] For a discussion of Theodora's secondary place behind her sister in imperial protocol, see Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), p. 151 "she [Theodora] allowed Zoe to take precedence and, although both were empresses, Theodora held rank inferior to the older woman." Also see ibid., p. 156: "Both of them set in front of the royal tribunal, so aligned that Theodora was slightly behind her sister."

The first reconstruction is more likely to be correct as it fits with imperial protocol and the rules of imperial representation and produces a self-contained imperial group in the center of a larger composition, while the second solution violates the protocol of precedence and produces a disjointed imperial group whose members are turning and facing away from one another.[32] Moreover, compositionally it is more likely, that the pointy ends of the *thorakia* would be pointing towards the center rather than away from it.[33] The direction of the emperor's gaze also led some to propose that that the original composition may have included a lost image of Christ in whose direction the emperor would be looking,[34] this however seems quite unlikely. The glances of the figures enhance the liveliness of the composition by leading the viewer's eye across the panels in the direction of their gazes. Moreover, there is also a parallel to this treatment of the glances on another enamel group representing two empresses crowned by the Virgin, a roundel embedded into the Khakhuli Triptych, that will be discussed below. Here too, all figures are shown with sidelong glances (Fig. 139). The Virgin, and the taller empress on her right turn their gazes sharply to their lefts in the direction of the shorter empress, who returns their gazes, thus the Virgin does not look in the direction of the figure on her privileged right side but gazes towards the other on her left. The employment of sidelong glances may be a stylistic feature of a particular workshop in Constantinople used primarily to animate the imagery and to link figures with one another in complex figural

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[32] In Sinai gr. 364 the figures are shown with frontal figures and faces; Constantine gazes forward at the viewer, while Zoe, who stands on his right, looks away from him, to her right, where the second dedicatory image of the manuscript was placed. Theodora's face is too damaged to establish in which direction she was looking.

[33] This is the case, for instance on f.26r of Paris Coislin 239 (Fig. 180), where two allegorical figures are shown in the guise of empresses. A similar solution is also found on f.44v of the twelfth century Madrid Skylitzes chronicle, where the five daughters or Theophilos are shown. Here, the *thorakia* of Anastasia and Anna are turned toward each other with their pointy ends, while the *thorakia* of the other three empresses are folded in the same way as that of Anna, for illustration, see Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), fig. 7. On f.3r of Sinai gr. 364 (Fig. 160) the *thorakia* of the empresses are folded in the same direction, and this is also the case on the empress roundels of the Khakhuli Triptych (Figs. 138-140). One finds a similar arrangement on the two pages representing a group of women in illuminations decorating the the homilies of John Kokkinobaphos in the Paris gr. 1208 and Vatican gr. 1162, see Wipertus Rudt de Collenberg, "Le 'Thorakion", Recherches iconographiques," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome* 83, no. 2 (1971): pp, 263-361, figs. 77-78. Thus none of the examples that contain representations of two or more empresses show them with *thorakia* that are oriented away from one another — they are either folded in the same way and thus parallel each other or they are folded in such a way that their narrow ends point towards each other rather than away from each other.

[34] Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century*, p. 101.

groups.[35] Further, it is also possible that the reason while on the Monomachos Crown both Zoe and Constantine are looking in the direction of Theodora is to emphasize her importance in the imperial triad as she may have commissioned the object, or possibly it was offered to her or to the monastery where she spent much of her life as a gift.

Various but often overlapping, interpretations have been proposed about the meaning of the imagery found on the Monomachos Crown. Oberschall linked the presence of the haloed dancing girls with Davidic associations and suggested that the emperor is presented as a new David on the enamel plaques. She, however, also acknowledged that the representation of dancing women also conjures up associations with imperial ceremonials performed at the hippodrome.[36] Grabar, on the other hand drew attention to the profane character of the imagery although recognized that no recorded ceremonial corresponds exactly to the imagery, and concluded that the iconography perhaps reflects private feasts staged in the seclusion of the palace gardens.[37] Drossoyanni, suggested that the dancers may refer to festivities surrounding an imperial wedding.[38] Restle also linked the iconography of the dancing girls with profane imperial ceremonials, namely the imperial *adventus*.[39] Cormack interpreted the imagery of the Monomachos Crown in relation to its assumed function as a diplomatic gift sent to Andrew I in Hungary. While he did not question that the dancing girls may be read as Davidic references, he proposed that they might have also reflected what he

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[35] As I will argue below, I believe the Monomachos Crown and the empress roundels were produced in the same workshop, and likely represent the same imperial sisters, Zoe and Theodora. Redford described side-long glances as characteristic features of Georgian enamels, although he does not comment about their use on the Monomachos Crown, which he assigns to a Constantinopolitan workshop, see Scott Redford, "How Islamic Is It? The Inssbruck Plate and Its Setting," *Muquarnas* 7 (1990): pp. 119-35, especially p. 130.

[36] Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos császár koronája (The Crown of the Emperor Constantine Monomachos)* , pp. 29-30, 75-76. Oberschall emphasizes that the dancing girls have haloes, which in her view supports a connection with a Davidic reading, yet one must note that the women who are represented celebrating David's exploits by dance are not shown with haloes. Mihalik also argued for a Davidic reading of the imagery, although he also mentioned the unlikely possibility, that the dancing girls may be disguised representations of Monomachos' lovers, Skleraina and the Alan Princess, see Mihalik, "Problematik der Rekonstruktion der Monomachos-Krone," pp. 209-212.

[37] Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," pp. 277-279; he also noted the strong connection with Islamic court imagery.

[38] Phane A. Drossoyianni, "A Pair of Byzantine Crowns," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/3 (1982): pp. 529-36, p. 532.

[39] Marcell Restle, "Hofkunst - höfische Kunst Konstantinopels in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit," in *Höfische Kultur in Südosteuropa*, ed. Reihhard Lauer and Hans Georg Majer (Göttingen: 1994), pp. 25-41, especially pp. 29-30.

calls the "language of the international diplomat;" the dancers thus may allude to the pleasures of the Islamic court.[40] However, one wonders why would an object intended for Andrew I, a Christian ruler raised in the orthodox court of Kiev and therefore clearly familiar with Byzantine ideology and imagery would be the recipient of a work in which Cormack identifies Islamic overtones. Maguire emphasized that the imagery is a visual expression of imperial virtues articulated in panegyrical texts of the middle Byzantine period, which frequently present the emperor or empress as a garden of graces.[41] Kiss broadened Maguire's interpretation of the garden imagery and suggested that in addition to expressing imperial virtues there are also references to a vision of the empire as a peaceful, New Paradise.[42] Kiss further linked the imagery with theological literature of the eleventh century, specifically with the writings of Elias Ekdicos who discusses together the two virtues represented on the crown, Tapeinosis and Aletheia,[43] and also proposed that the imagery may also contain triumphal references, as suggested by Oberschall and Restle both through references to imperial ceremonials and through connections with the David and Moses imagery.[44]

Tapeinosis, or humility was a virtue mentioned both with regard to Theodora and Constantine. Humility was a virtue particularly linked with monastic life and therefore its connection with Theodora is appropriate as she spent much of her life in the Monastery of the Petrion.[45] Psellos described her conduct as humble with regard to her position in the imperial hierarchy in the Chronographia,[46] and also praises Theodora's humility (specifically using the term *tapeinosis*) both in a panegyric addressed to her and

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[40] Cormack, "But is it Art?" pp. 231-236.
[41] See Maguire, "Davidic Virtue: The Crown of Constantine Monomachos and its Images," pp. 118, 122-123; and in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 212. In his view, the haloes of the dancing girls underscore that they should be read as allegorical figures, see Maguire, "Davidic Virtue: The Crown of Constantine Monomachos and its Images," p. 122.
[42] Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)" pp. 154-155, 157.
[43] Ibid., p. 156; Anthologion Gnomikon in PG 127, 1130B, 1137A. For Elias Ekdicos, see ODB I, p. 686.
[44] Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)"
[45] See ODB III, p. 2178. For a twelfth century representation of the monastic virtue *tapienophrosyne*, see Maguire, "Davidic Virtue: The Crown of Constantine Monomachos and its Images," p. 120.
[46] Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , pp. 142, 151, 156.

in his oration commemorating her death.[47] Constantine too is described in Psellos' chronicle as a humble ruler: "... but there was another side to his character which I confess met with my approval at the time; in fact, even today I am no less convinced of its nobility. I refer to the man's utter lack of boastfulness and false pride; the fact that no haughty or bombastic words ever fell from his lips..."[48] and he also extols him for his moderate character.[49] In a somewhat later manuscript the personification of Aletheia appears alongside the emperor on f.2r of the Coislin 79 but here she is paired with Dikaiosyne (Justice) rather than Humility.[50]

Kazhdan and Giles noted that "imperial virtues were understood not as personal qualities but as an eternal essence, tinted by the colors of semi-divinity. . ."[51] Yet virtues were also perceived in the eleventh century as essential parts of representing the image of the ruler in a truthful and lifelike manner, as the poet Christophoros Mitylenaios from the first half of the eleventh century attests: "If you are painting only Michael's appearance, then mix your ochre and grind the other colors, but if, together with his appearance [you include] all his virtues, set him up alive, if you can do so."[52] The Monomachos Crown shows a representation of an emperor surrounded by six female figures, all of which can be understood as personifications of his virtues. While the imperial sisters Zoe and Theodora form an imperial triad with the emperor in the middle of the representation, the empresses themselves can be seen as allegorical figures. Their names already engender such a reading as they embody life and the gift of god, interestingly appropriate to the

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[47] Eduard ed. Kurtz, *Michaelis Pselli Sripta Minora* (Milan: 1936), p. 5,4; Antony Robert Littlewood, *Michaelis Pselli Oratoria Minora, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Greacorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig: 1985), no. 1,100.

[48] Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , p. 172.

[49] Ibid. , p. 199. For humility as part of Byzantine life and behavior, see Alexander P. Kazhdan and Giles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies.* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), p. 62. For a discussion of humility as an imperial virtue, see Maguire, "Davidic Virtue: The Crown of Constantine Monomachos and its Images," pp. 120-121.

[50] Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 208. Oikonomides notes that Aletheia is also represented in Cod. V of the Marciana Library among other personifications and in illuminated Psalters, see Oikonomides, "La courenne dite de Constantine Monomaque," p. 252.

[51] Kazhdan and Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies.* p. 125.

[52] Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 220, who suggested that the emperor referred to in this passage was Michael IV (1034-41), one of the husbands of Zoe.

very different roles and behaviors of the two empresses, the passionate, fun-loving Zoe and the monastic Theodora.[53] The empresses further embody and make visible Monomachos's legitimacy as a ruler, for they were the last two offspring of the Macedonian dynasty, and as such were particularly revered.[54] The dancers provide a different type of female presence surrounding the emperor evoking feasts and celebrations of his achievements. Finally, Tapeinosis and Aletheia embody two crucial virtues of the emperor, but possibly also stand as virtues of the empresses.

Three roundels, that formed part of a single series, have been embedded into the Khakhuli Triptych in Tbilisi.[55] They show empresses in the presence of holy figures. The plaques lack inscriptions, their shapes are irregular, and appear to have been cut out of their original context, which may have included inscriptions identifying the figures.

On the first panel, the Virgin stands on a rectangular green *suppedion* clad in a light blue undergarment and a dark blue cloak (Fig. 139).[56] She lifts her hands towards the crowns of the two empresses who flank her. The empresses are dressed identically and have similar facial features and hairstyles. They are clad in a light blue garment decorated with roundels on the shoulders and yellow heart-shaped motifs and white pearls; on top they wear the *loros* with a *thorakion* adorned with a cross. Their oval faces are framed by dark hair, and have simple crowns with no pendilia, and appear to have a red head-cover underneath their crown, which falls on their shoulder.[57] In her left hand

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[53] Another example, where the empress is presented as a personification of a virtue of the ruler comes from Corippus' panegyric on Justin II, where he puts the following words in the mouth of the emperor: "We therefore are the head of this united body; for this holy head Wisdom (Sapientia) is made the consort, to rule with me together in honor the world entrusted to me, sitting in the same place." See Averil Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: 1976), p. 98.

[54] See for instance Psellos's report about the revolt that broke out when Michael V banished his adopted mother, Zoe from the palace and exiled her in 1042. The women of Constantinople stormed the streets and cried: "Where can she be, she who alone is noble of heart and alone is beautiful? Where can she be, she who alone of all women is free, the mistress of all the imperial family, the rightful heir to the Empire, whose father was emperor, whose grandfather was monarch before him — yes, and great-grandfather too? How was it this low-born fellow [i.e. Michael V] dared to raise a hand against a woman of such lineage?" Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , pp. 138-139.

[55] For the Khakhuli Triptych, see Wachtang Dchobadze Zizichwili, "Los esmaltes del icono de Jajuli," *Archivo Espanol de Arte* 25 (1952): pp. 25-51; Shalva Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metawork From Aniquity to the 18th Century* (London, New York, Sydney, Toronto: Hamlyn, 1971), pp. 106-118.

[56] 5 x 4.4 cm, see Zizichwili, "Los esmaltes del icono de Jajuli," no. 94, p. 49; L. Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* (Tbilisi: 1984), no. 68.

[57] Khuskhivadze suggested that the red cloth may represent a type of head-cover worn by Georgian women, the so called *mandili*, Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine*

each empress holds a white scroll, while raises her right palm in front of her chests. The empress on the right of the Virgin is taller in stature, presumably indicating her age or senior status. The virgin and the taller empress turn their eyes toward the shorter empress, who in turn looks in their direction. The empresses do not have *suppedia*. The figures are uncomfortably crammed into the available space of the plaque, indicating that most likely the sides of the original panel have been cut off.

On the second roundel, an angel approaches an empress from her right (Fig. 138).[58] The angel holds a white scroll in his left hand while he raises his left arm in a gesture of greeting towards the empress, who stands on a green *suppedion* and has red imperial shoes. She is dressed in the same way as the empresses on the previous panel, and holds a white scroll in her left hand while lifts her right hand in front of her chest. Her gaze is turned towards the approaching angel, and her head is framed by a green halo outlined by red. The right wing of the angel has been cut off and the enamel is missing from his right foot.

The third panel shows an empress approaching St. John the Baptist with raised palms, while John lifts his right hand in a gesture of greeting and holds a staff and an inscribed scroll (with John 1:29) in his left hand (Fig. 140).[59] A short, stylized tree customary in representations of St. John the Baptist appears between the two figures. The empress is dressed identically to the empress figures on the previous pieces.

Various places of manufacture have been suggested for the roundels. Khushkivadze proposed that they were of Georgian origin but noted their strong stylistic connections with the Monomachos Crown.[60] Kiss also connected the plaques stylistically with the Monomanchos Crown emphasizing the similar representation of their dress with narrow sleeves on one side and wide sleeves on the other, however, maintained that they

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Arts , p. 60. It is, however, also possible, that the red cloth is an awkward representation of the empresses pendilia, see for instance the representation of the pendilia on the Monomachos Panel, or on a panel representing the Virgin holding a crown from the Khakhuli Triptych, Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* , no. 57. Both of these images show wide, flap-like pendilia rather than rows of pearls.

[58] 5 x 4.4 cm, see Zizichwili, "Los esmaltes del icono de Jajuli," no. 92, pp. 47-49; Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* , no. 70.

[59] Zizichwili, "Los esmaltes del icono de Jajuli," no. 93, p. 49; Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* , no. 69. John 1:29: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

[60] L. Khuskhivadze, *Gruzinskije emali* (Tbilisi: 1981), p. 89-92.

were most likely produced in Constantinople.[61] Mikaberidze, on the other hand pointed to stylistic connections between the roundels and the Michael and Maria panel on the Khakhuli Triptych, and suggested that they were of Constantinopolitan origin.[62]

I believe scholars are right in emphasizing the strong stylistic connections between the empress roundels and the Monomachos Crown. There are a series of stylistic features that can be paralleled between the two series, in addition to what has been noted by previous scholars. There is a strong similarity in color scheme, and the emphatically oval faces of the empresses with the small red mouths and dark arched eyebrows demonstrate strong visual affinity between the two sets. The shape, decoration, and color scheme of the crowns on the empress roundels replicate almost exactly the shape of the crown of the emperor from the Monomachos Crown. The representation of the *loros* is also similar on the two sets in shape, color-scheme, and red outline; in fact the *loroi* on the roundels appear to be simplified versions of the *loroi* of the Monomachos crown dictated by the difference in size.[63] The haloes of the empresses on the roundels showing the encounter with the angel and with John the Baptist include curled cloissons inside the green enamel, similarly to the decoration of the haloes of the empresses on the Monomachos Crown. The shapes and decorations of the *suppedia* are also similar between the two series including the decorative curled cloissons of the rectangular *suppedion* of the Virgin.[64] In addition, the treatment of the curly locks of the archangel on one of the empress roundels is also similar to the representation of the hair of the dancing girls on the Monomachos Crown. The representation of the drapery around the right elbow of the archangel also finds its parallel in the treatment of drapery around the elbow of Tapeinosis from the Monomachos Crown. A further stylistic feature links the

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[61] Kiss, "Új eredmények a Monomachos-korona kutatásában? (New Research Results Regarding the Monomachos Crown?)."

[62] Avtandil Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bilprogramme - Ikonographie - Stil*, ed. Gundram Koch (Wiesbaden: 2000), pp. 183-210, especially p. 197.

[63] The roundels are 5 cm in height, while the empress panels of the Monomachos Crown are 10.5 and 10.7 cm in height.

[64] It is noteworthy that the decoration of the suppedion of Michael VII on the panel inserted into the Khakhuli Triptych shows a different type of decoration where the cloisons form a symmetrical floral pattern. Unfortunately the suppedion of Maria is nearly completely covered by the frame so it cannot be ascertained what kind of decoration it had without removing the plaque from the frame.

two sets: all figures on both series are shown with eyes cast strongly to the side, no figures on any of the pieces gaze forward.[65]

The identification of the empresses has been debated. Kondakov identified the two imperial figures of the double coronation panel as a king and queen of Georgia, a clearly erroneous suggestions given that both imperial figures wear the *thorakion*, a characteristic feature of female imperial attire.[66] Amaranashvili suggested that the double coronation scene shows Helena, the niece of Romanos III, who married Bagarat IV and the mother of Bagarat IV, Mariam, while the composition with John the Baptist represents Maria of Alania.[67] Mikaberidze, on the other hand suggested, that the double coronation roundel shows Maria of Alania (the Georgian princess, who married the Byzantine emperor Michael VII Doukas) and her mother, queen Borena, or possibly her grandmother, Mariam,[68] while the other plaques show Maria of Alania. Gordeev suggested that the plaques were of Byzantine origin and represented Theodora and Zoe,[69] an identification also proposed by Zizichwili, although without supportive evidence.[70]

In my view the empresses shown on the three roundels should be identified with Zoe and Theodora, who reigned together in 1042 and had unprecedented importance as the last two members of the Macedonian dynasty. The extant and textually attested examples of the imperial double coronation iconography invariably show Byzantine imperial figures who have been elevated to the throne and who are understood to be ruling together, thus it seems unlikely that the representation would depict a Georgian queen and her mother, grandmother, or mother-in-law as suggested by some scholars. On the other hand, Zoe and Theodora have been represented side by side on gold coins

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[65] Redford noted that the representation of the shifting of the gaze of figures to the side is a characteristic feature of Georgian enamels, see Redford, "How Islamic Is It? The Inssbruck Plate and Its Setting," p. 130.
[66] See Kondakov, *Geschichte und Denkmäler des byzantinischen Emails* .
[67] S. Amiranashvili, *The Khakhuli Triptych* (Tbilisi: 1972), figs. 10-12, and text next to figs. 101-103.
[68] Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," p. 197. Mikaberidze also proposed that a fourth plaque might have been part of the series, see ibid., p. 198. In Mikaberidze's view, the enamel may have arrived to Georgia with Maria of Alania, when she visited her dying father in 1072, see ibid., p. 197.
[69] Khuskhivadze, *Gruzinskije emali* , p. 92.
[70] Zizichwili, "Los esmaltes del icono de Jajuli," p. 49.

issued during their joint reign (Fig. 58).[71] The three roundels form a compositional unit, with the double coronation in the middle flanked by the other two scenes. The differentiation in size of the two empresses on the double coronation roundel is also found on the other two pieces; the empress encountering John the Baptist is shown with a shorter stature than the empress approached by the archangel (here the empress also stands on a *suppedion*) – clearly there is an attempt to differentiate the figures by their status. Zoe, the elder must be shown as taller while Theodora, the second in line is represented as the shorter figure. Thus it would appear that Zoe and Theodora are crowned/blessed in the central roundel, while an angel greets Zoe and John the Baptist approaches Theodora on the other two panels. These panels emphasize the divinely sanctioned rule of the purple-born sisters through a series of personal encounters between holy figures and the empresses. The irregular outlines of the roundels and their cramped compositions suggest that the plaques likely contained identifying inscriptions that have been deliberately cut off when they were inserted into the Khakhuli Triptych. By cutting off the names and titles of the Byzantine empresses the figures could be divested from their original identity and fit seamlessly into the new Georgian context. The strong stylistic connections between the empress roundels and the Monomachos Crown also support the view that the roundels should be linked with Zoe and Theodora rather than Georgian queens, and also make it more likely that they were produced in Constantinople, likely in the same workshop as the Monomachos Crown. The plaques may have found their way to Georgia through the frequent embassies exchanged between the court of Monomachos and the father of his lover, the Alanian princess, as Psellos reports:

> For the first time in its history the land of the Alanians was surfeited with good things that came to it form our Rome. Ships sailed into harbor, and when they once more put to sea, they were all loaded with precious things that belonged to us, things that in the old days made the Roman Empire the object of envy.... Two or three times every year envoys used to come from her father in Alania to his girl Augusta, and Constantine would show her off to them (like an exhibition on a stage), proclaiming that she was his consort and empress, and actually calling her by those names. He

[71] They are paired with the Virgin who is shown on the other side of the coin. For this coins, see discussion in Chapter III.

himself gave them some gifts, others he encouraged his beautiful 'wife' to present to them.[72]

Maria of Alania on the Khakhuli Triptych

A further enamel plaque inserted into the Khakhuli Triptych shows Maria of Alania and her husband, Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078) crowned by a bust of Christ reaching out from a segment of the sky (Fig. 141).[73] The frontal imperial figures stand atop identical light blue *suppedia*, and are clad in garments made of similar dark blue material, but shaped differently: the emperor's robe is fashioned with narrow sleeves, while the dress of the empress displays wide sleeves hanging below her knees. On top, they wear the male and female versions of the *loros*. The emperor carries the *labarum* in his right hand and a white scroll in his left, while the empress holds a scepter in her left hand and lifts her right hand in front of her chest.[74] Their crowns have different shapes, and the emperor's crown is laden with a pair of pearl pendilia. Both figures have green haloes outlined by red. Emperor and empress gaze forward, while Christ glances in the direction of the emperor, indicating his importance. The inscription between the two figures describes Christ's action: "I crown Michael and Maria with my hands" clearly suggesting an equal share in the imperial power by emperor and empress.[75]

The panel was most likely executed in Byzantium and may have been sent as a present to Maria's father, king Bagarat IV, or his follower George II.[76] The rather dry, descriptive style of the facial features of empress Maria, the treatment of her hair, and the

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[72] Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , pp. 236-237. Constantine began his affair with the Georgian princess while Zoe was still alive.

[73] Georgian National Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi, silver gilt, 7.2 x 7 cm. See Shalva Amiranashvili, *Medieval Georgian Enamels of Russia* (New York: 1964), pp. 100-101; Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* , no. 39. Also see: Nicos Zias and et al., *Byzance entre l'Orient et l'Occident* (Athens: 1993), p. 56.

[74] Amiranashvilis suggested that Maria holds a Georgian scepter, see Amiranashvili, *Medieval Georgian Enamels of Russia* , p. 100; yet there is little reason the attribute special Georgian significance to the scepter, as the Hungarian king Geza holds a nearly identical scepter on the Holy Crown of Hungary.

[75] For a discussion of the significance of this iconography, see Chapter IV.

[76] Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels from the 5th to the 13th Century* , pp. 115-119; Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "Eudoka Makrembolitissa and the Romanos Ivory," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977): pp. 305-25, especially p. 318; Khuskhivadze, *Medieval Cloisonné Enamels at the Georgian State Museum of Fine Arts* , p. 43; Mikaberidze, "Die byzantinische Kaiserin Maria-Martha im Lichte neuer archäologische Ausgraben," pp. 197-198. Amiranashvili proposed that the plaque was of Georgian origin, see Amiranashvili, *Georgian Metawork From Aniquity to the 18th Century* , p. 118.

representation of her *loros* with the drooping pearls, as well as the general color scheme link Maria's representation with the Zoe roundel at the Treasury of San Marco, further substantiating that the panel was likely produced in Byzantium.

Eudokia Makrembolitissa and the Moscow Reliquary

A sliver gilt octagonal reliquary in the shape of a ciborium at the State Historical Museum in Moscow includes another imperial representation, Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067) and Eudokia Makrembolitissa blessed/crowned by Christ (Fig. 142-145).[77] The imperial couple is shown in a double coronation scene. Emperor and empress are dressed in identical *loroi* and wear matching crowns, they both hold globes in their left hands, the emperor carries the labarum in his right hand and the empress lifts up her right palm in front of her chest in a gesture of piety, a common feature of representations of empresses. The following inscription surrounds the figures: "Constantine Doukas in Christ the Lord pious emperor of the Romans, Eudokia in Christ the Lord the great empress of the Romans."[78] Another side shows two standing military saints, Nestor and Loupos, represented as fresh-faced youths with long locks.[79] The other two wide sides of the reliquary are inscribed with the following dedication: "I am a true image of the

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[77] 15 cm high, 11.5 cm wide. André Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950): pp. 3-28, especially pp. 18-28; Alisa Bank, *Iskusstvo vizantii v sobraniiakh SSSR: Katalog vystavki* (Moscow: 1977), pp. 82-83; Alice Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums* (New York, Leningrad: 1978), p. 310; Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , pp. 77-78. For Constantine Doukas, see Demetrios I. Polemis, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London: 1968), pp. 28-34, for Eudokia Makrembolitissa, see ibid., p. 34, no. 48.

[78] *KωNCTANTI EN Xω Θω ΠICTOC BACIA PωMEωN, + EVΔOKIA EN Xω Tω Θω MΓ BACI PωMEωN*, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 77. Goldschmidt and Weitzmann noted that the inscription of this panel may have been added later, but without further discussion, see Adolf Goldschmidt and Kurt Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X-XIII. Jahrhunderts*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: 1979), p. 15; presumably they noted the difference between the somewhat irregular letter forms and haphazard arrangement of the inscription of this panel and the regularized letter forms and clear layout of the dedicatory inscription.

[79] *O A NECTωP, O A AOYΠOC*, Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 77. Demetrios is frequently shown together with Nestor and Loupos (who were his companions according to his vita) and other military saints. Nestor and Loupos are represented for instance on a twelfth reliquary of St. Demetrios preserved at the treasury of the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos, and on another twelfth century reliquary of St. Demetrios at Halberstadt, see Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," no. 1, pp. 4-5; no. 3, p. 6.

ciborium of the lance-pierced martyr Demetrios. On the outside I have Christ inscribed, who with his hands crowns the fair couple. He who made me anew is John of the family of the Autoreianoi, by profession mystographos."[80] The four narrow sides are decorated with intertwining palmette motifs, and the inside of the reliquary contains a small box in its center.[81] Grabar identified a small reliquary in the shape of a sarcophagus preserved at the Lavra of St. Athanasios on Mount Athos as the missing part of the Moscow reliquary.[82] The lid of this reliquary shows an orant figure of St. Demetrios while underneath a second image represents the deceased Demetrios in repose. The following inscription envelopes three sides of the box: "Here is preserved the holy blood of the martyr Demetrios, confirming John's faith and deep desire," while the fourth side shows the words: "holy blood, holy myron."[83]

Several suggestions have been made to identify the original ciborium upon which the Moscow reliquary is based. Some scholars have argued that the reliquary copies the ciborium of St. Demetrios from his basilica in Thessaloniki, although this was hexagonal rather than eight-sided as the Moscow reliquary,[84] while others have suggested that it reproduces a ciborium set up in one of the Constantinopolitan churches dedicated to

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[80] Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 77 provides the original Greek text and its English translation; + *CAΦHC ΠEΦYKA TOY KIBωPIOY TYΠOC TOY AOΓXONYKTOY MAPTYPOC ΔHMHTPIOY Exω ΔE XPICTON EKTOC ECTHΛωMENON CTEΦONTA XEPCI THN KAΛHN ΞYNOPIΔA O Δ AY ME TEYΞAC IωANNHC EK ΓENOYC AYTOPEIANωN THN TYXHN MYCTOΓPAΦOC.* For a reproduction of this inscription, see Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," figs. 21, 22, and Bank, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of Soviet Museums* , fig. 206.

[81] It is 6x3x2 cm, see Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," p. 19.

[82] Ibid., pp. 7, 26-28. The Mount Athos reliquary box is 4.3x2.5x1.3 cm.

[83] *TO CEΠTON AIMA MAPTYPOC ΔMHTPIOY CYNTETHPHTAI ENTAYΘA ΘEIAN ΠICTIN BEBAIOYN IωANNOY KAI ΠOΘON*, see Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 78; Christopher Walter, "St. Demetrius: The Myroblytos of Thessalonika," *Eastern Churches Review* V (1973): pp. 157-78, especially p. 162. *AΓION AIMA, AΓION MYPON*, Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," , p. 7. For a rejection of Grabar's proposition, see Irina Sterligova, "Dmitrievskii sobor vo Vladimire k 800-letiiu sozdaniia," ed. E.S. Smirnova (Moscow: 1997), pp. 255-73.

[84] Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," pp. 20-22; Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 78. For a discussion of the hexagonal ciborium in the basilica of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki, see Grabar, "Quelques reliquaries de saint Démetrios et de martyrium du saint à Salonique," pp. 8-16; Robin Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and Its Icons* (London: George Philip, 1985). Also see Charalambos Bakirtzis, "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (2002): pp. 175-92, especially pp. 176-185, 191-192 (with further bibliography), who analyzed the tangled and contradictory evidence attesting to the history of the ciborium.

Demetrios,[85] which itself would presumably be a copy of the original from Salonika. Most recently Bakirtzis proposed that the Moscow reliquary copies the form of sixth century reliquaries — given to pilgrims of high rank — that replicated the appearance of the sixth century ciborium and contained sanctified earth from the saint's burial place, and suggested that the octagonal form reflects a secondary baldachin erected in the basilica of St. Demetrios over the tomb of the saint in the eleventh century.[86] Although Bakirtzis does not state that the secondary baldachin was considered a ciborium, one imagines that it would be likely that the notions previously attached to the ciborioum standing inside the nave were at this point invested onto the new structure that now was erected over the tomb of the saint. Yet the word ciborium referring to a holy site in Salonika was preserved for example in the synaxarion text read in Constantinople during the feast of Demetrios, thus it is appropriate that it would be used in a newly commissioned work, as it could lend authenticity to the reliquary itself.[87] Either way, the reliquary itself claims to be a true replica of the cult site of Demetrios, whether directly copying an eleventh century structure in the basilica, or copying a sixth century reliquary modeled on the original ciborium.

Unfortunately the inscription of the reliquary does not provide information about the specific reasons for its production. While we learn that a certain John Autoreianos commissioned the work to express his piety, it is not made clear if he intended it as a gift to the imperial couple represented on the reliquary (although this is quite likely), nor is it clear what his relationship may have been to the imperial house. If the Mount Athos reliquary is indeed part of the original, then one may suppose that John's "deep desire" refers to some kind of benefit he expected to receive from the emperor or the imperial

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[85] Walter shares this view, and implies that St. Demetrios of the Deuteron may have contained a copy of the ciborium of Thessalonika in Constantinople, as the twelfth century synaxarion of Constantinople mentions the saint's martyrium, see Walter, "St. Demetrius: The Myroblytos of Thessalonika," p. 162, and Hyppolite Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye, Acta Sanctorum, LXI, 1. Propyleum ad Acta Sanctroum Novembris.* (Bruxelles: 1902), p. 166. For St. Demetrios of the Deuteron, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie*, vol. III (Paris: 1953), p. 94.

[86] Bakirtzis, "Pilgrimage to Thessalonike: The Tomb of St. Demetrios," pp. 179-180, 184, 191-192. Bakirtzis also emphasizes that no evidence attests to the continued existence of the hexagonal ciborium erected in the nave of St. Demetrios in Salonika in the middle Byzantine period.

[87] Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , 164/22, 44; 165/22, 41.

family. Perhaps John indeed presented the reliquary to the emperor in order to offer him relief from his illness in 1066, as has been suggested.[88] But we need not link the gift necessarily with the emperor's illness, as Demetrios was not only considered a healer but also as a successful military protector of the city of Salonika, and because of this quality a reliquary of Demetrios may have been considered an appropriate gift to the emperor. A true replica of Demetrios' cult site containing his relic may have been seen as a potent force protecting the imperial city and the empire, clearly needed as the Norman conquests spread in Italy and the Turkish pressure increased in Asian Minor in the 1060s.[89] Demetrios began to be represented as a military saint for the first time in the eleventh century, and at the end of the eleventh century a strong link has been forged between certain emperors and the saint through the placement of his effigy on coins.[90] Eudokia's inclusion in the representation is hardly surprising, as she also featured on the coins of Constantine during his lifetime, a rather unusual gesture that underscores her exceptional importance.[91]

Conclusion

The metal-works examined in this chapter are unique luxury objects most likely all produced in Constantinople. The stylistic qualities of the enamels suggest that they

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[88] Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , p. 78.

[89] For the military affairs of the empire in this period, see Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 600.

[90] Judith Clark, "The Life Cycle of St. Demetrios in an Early 14th Century Illuminated Manuscript in the Bodleian Library" (M. A. thesis, University of Washington, 1996), pp. 50-52. A connection between St. Demetrios, the military protector saint and emperors is also demonstrated by a late Byzantine mosaic icon, whose revetment contained the following inscription: "Oh Great Martyr Demetrios, intercede with the Lord that he may help me, I, Your faithful servant, the basileus of the Romans, Justinian, to conquer my enemies and subjugate them beneath my feet." See Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (New York, New Haven, London: 2004), p. 231; ibid Durand suggested that the revetment with the inscription was a fifteenth century Italian work. Nevertheless, it seems to reflect a well-known tradition about the protection St. Demetrios offered to Byzantine emperors since the time of Justinian in the sixth century. Scholars accept that the text most likely refers to Justinian I, see ibid 232; also see A. A. Vasiliev, "The Historical Significance of the Mosaic of Saint Demetrius at Sassoferrato," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950): pp. 31-39.

[91] Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), pl. LXIV, 8.1, 8.10, 8.19.

may have emerged from two workshops, as close stylistic links may be found between the Zoe roundel and the Khakhuli plaque showing Michael and Maria, and even tighter stylistic affinities may be identified between the empress roundels from the Khakhuli Triptych and the Crown of Constantine Monomachos.

These objects maintain strong links with traditional iconography found in other media through the double coronation scene that appears on three of the five objects, an iconographic theme also popular on other luxury objects, such as ivories and manuscripts, and is also found on monumental images in church interiors.[92] Based on the extant evidence on may speculate, that possibly this iconography was originally aimed at an audience of the select few (such as courtiers, imperial family members and relatives), as suggested by the types of objects that carry this imagery; even the monumental representations of the double coronation scene appear to have been located in semi-private contexts of monastic churches, and would likely have had a limited audience. Not until the reign of Eudokia Makrembolitissa do we have evidence for the use of the double coronation iconography in a wider context, when the image is placed on the widely circulating coinage.

Two objects, the Monomachos Crown and the Empress Roundels, however, represent unique iconographic sets within the extant imagery, and are both linked with the court of the purple-born sisters, Zoe and Theodora. While one is tempted to overemphasize the unique character of these two objects and explain their special characteristics solely through the unique circumstances of the period of Zoe's and Theodora's prominence, both of these objects can be well-integrated into the visual and textual manifestations of imperial ideology and visual practice known from the tenth-eleventh centuries.

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[92] See a discussion of the double coronation iconography in Chapter V.

CHAPTER VII: EMPRESSES IN MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATIONS

Empresses in Paris Gr. 510

The first extant illuminated manuscript commissioned for a Byzantine emperor is a tome of the Homilies of Gregory Nazianzens, Paris gr. 510 dating to the 879-882.[1] It is decorated with a lavish series of 41 full-page miniatures.[2] The book begins on folio Av displaying a badly flaked image of the enthroned Pantokrator followed by a bifolio showing the imperial family to whom the codex was offered as a gift.[3] Folios Br and Cv show the empress Eudokia Ingerina with the sons Leo and Alexander (Fig. 147), and the emperor Basil I flanked by Elijah and Gabriel (Fig. 146), respectively, while folios Bv and Cr display two identical monumental crosses inscribed with the legend IC XC NHKA (Figs. 148-149).[4] The current page order is not the original: folio Cv with the

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[1] Parchment, 464 folios, ca. 410 x 300 mm. For a detailed codicological description and date, see Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, 6* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 2-7. Spatharakis dated the manuscript to 879, see Ioannis Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 23 (1974): pp. 97-105, especially pp. 100, 104 with references to earlier bibliography.

[2] Henri Omont, *Fac-similés des miniatures des plus anicens manuscits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIe siècle* (Paris: 1902), pp. 12-13; Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," *Dumbaton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): pp. 197-228; Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510;" Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), pp. 96-99; Ioannis Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453, Byzantina Neerlandica 8* (Leiden: 1981), pp. 6-9; Ioannis Spatharakis, "A Note on the Imperial Portraits and the Date of Par. Gr. 510," *Jahrbuch der Österriechischen Byzantinistik* 39 (1989):pp. 89-93, Ioli Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," *Jahrbuch der Österriechischen Byzantinistik* 27 (1978): pp. 19-24; Leslie Brubaker, "The Illustrated Copy of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus" (Ph. D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1983); Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* ; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); pp. 193-194.

[3] The same imperial family was also represented on the lost mosaic of the Kainourgion Palace, although the mosaic image also included the daughters of the imperial family; for a discussion of the Kainourgion mosaic, see Chapter IV.

[4] Maguire pointed out that one of the important churches built during Basil's reign, the Nea Ekklesia was dedicated to Christ, Gabriel, Elijah, the Virgin, and St. Nicholas, see Henry Maguire, "A Murderer among the Angels: The Frontispicece Miniature of Paris Gr. 510 and the Iconography of the Archangels in Byzantine Art," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker, *Illinois Byzantine Studies IV* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 63-71. Also see *Vita Basilii*, ch. 83 in I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), p. 325.

image of Basil must be placed before folio Br with the portrait of Eudokia and the co-emperors.[5]

Based on the sophistication of the imagery accompanying the texts, Der Nersessian suggested cautiously that the patriarch Photios might have been the patron of the manuscript.[6] This view was substantiated by the studies of Brubaker, who emphasized the self-serving political motivations of the patriarch who had just recently been recalled from exile and re-instituted in 877.[7] Brubaker also acknowledged that in addition to flattery the patriarch also offered advice to the emperor on proper behavior.[8] Mango, on the other hand argued that the manuscript was commissioned for the Nea Ekklesia built by Basil,[9] while Hennessy hypothesized that the Paris Gr. 510 may have been intended as a gift to the sons of Basil by their tutor Photios given the didactic nature of the imagery and the unusually great emphasis on the deeds of adolescent male heroes.[10]

Basil I, identified by an inscription above his head as *Basileios despots* appears in the middle of f.Cv clad in the purple *skaramangion* and golden *loros* and wears red imperial shoes sewn with rows of pearls (Fig. 146). The *archistrategos Gabriel*, as attested by an inscription, dressed identically stands on the emperor's left and crowns

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[5] Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," pp. 197-198.

[6] Ibid., p. 227.

[7] Leslie Brubaker, "Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth-Century Byzantium: The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris. (B.N. GR. 510)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XXXIX (1985): pp. 1-13, especially pp. 11-13.

[8] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , pp. 412-423. Peers argued that the manuscript offered by Photios as a gift to the emperor contained a more intricate message than simple panegyrical flattery suggesting that it served as a visual mirror of princes confronting Basil with an ideal view of the emperor, and the ideal (reverential) relationship the emperor should have toward the patriarch, see Glenn Peers, "Patriarchal Politics in the Paris Gregory (B.N. gr. 510)," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997): pp. 51-71. Peers, however, admits that the potentially subversive meaning of the imagery may have not been understood by Basil, but would have served to vindicate the patriarch to himself and his circle. Peers's reading of the imagery rests on the assumption that Photios's views about kingship and the relationship of church and state found a direct reflection in the imagery he commissioned for the emperor. But it is equally plausible that Photios, after his return from exile and re-elevation to the patriarchal see, would have commissioned a simply laudatory gift without a subversive agenda.

[9] Cyril Mango, "Review of Brubaker: Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 24 (2000): pp. 278-81, especially p. 280.

[10] Cecily Jane Hennessy, "Imagery of Childern in Byzantium" (Ph. D. dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2001), pp. 148-151.

him, while a second figure identified as *Hagios Elias* on the right offers the *labarum* to the emperor.[11] It is possible that the emperor and Gabriel held globes in their left hands originally.[12] The figures are frontal, although Elijah inclines slightly toward the emperor, and they stand on the same jeweled podium. The page is badly flaked, the faces are completely lost and most parts of the bodies are missing. The frame contains the following inscription: "...clearly Elijah records a victory over your enemies, while Gabriel announcing the joy, oh Basil, crowns you protector of the world,"[13] linking the triumph of Basil to his elevation to the imperial throne. Triumph, as a prerequisite and tool of legitimization of the imperial power is an idea long present in imperial ideology.[14]

A preliminary drawing visible underneath the flaking paint of the cross on f.Bv (Fig. 150) shows a long-bearded emperor dressed in the *loros* crowned by a beardless, *loros* clad youth of taller stature from the right, while a disembodied hand crowns the emperor from the left. The interpretation of this drawing has attracted scholarly discussion. Spatharakis suggested that it shows an abandoned representation of Constantine, Basil's oldest son who participated in his campaign to Germanicia in 879, but died soon after their return. In his view the manuscript was intended as a commemoration of the dual imperial victory of father and son, and the image of Constantine was never completed because of his death.[15] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner

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[11] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 96. Spatharakis noted that the *labarum* also appears on Basil's coinage Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," , p. 97. Also see Christopher Walter, "The Iconographical Sources for the Coronation of Milutin and Simonida at Gracanica," in *L'art byzantin au début du XIVe siècle* (Belgrade: 1978; reprint, Power and Prayer in Byzantine and Papal Imagery), pp. 183-200, especially pp. 192-193.

[12] Maguire, "A Murderer among the Angels: The Frontispicece Miniature of Paris Gr. 510 and the Iconography of the Archangels in Byzantine Art," p. 66. Also see the reconstruction drawing of f.Bv, where Gabriel seems to be holding an orb, Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," , fig. 3.

[13] *ΕΜΦΑΝωC ΝΙΚΗΝ ΚΑΤ'ΕΧΘΡωΝ ΗΛΙΑC ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΙ Ο ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ ΔΕ ΤΗΝ ΧΑΡΑΝ ΠΡΟΜΗΝΥωΝ ΒΑCΙΛΕΙΕ CΤΕΦΕΙ CΕ ΚΟCΜΟΥ ΠΡΟCΤΑΤΗΝ*, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 97, who notes that 24 characters are missing at the beginning of the inscription.

[14] See ODB III, pp. 2121-2122; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[15] Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," especially pp. 102-104; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 99; Spatharakis, "A Note on the Imperial Portraits and the Date of Par. Gr. 510." The *Vita Basilii* reports about Constantine's participation in the campaign to Germanicia, see *Vita Basilii*, ch. 46, Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp. 277-279. Spatharakis argued that Constantine was an adult in 879, and cited a *follis* of Basil that shows Constantine and Leo alongside Basil on which he discovered a beard on the face of Constantine, see Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," pp. 102-104. However, what

convincingly rejected this interpretation and argued that the drawing was a preliminary sketch for Basil's image, and was discarded for compositional and iconographic reasons[16] and argued that the coronation was substituted for the presentation of the *labarum* since it emphasizes the triumphal nature of the image and links Basil with the imperial tradition of Constantine the Great.[17] Further observations of the under-drawing may strengthen Kalavrezou's argument. The height of the angel and emperor was changed significantly between the preliminary sketch and the final image. The under-drawing represents Gabriel and Elijah as significantly taller figures towering over the emperor in the middle of the representation, while on the final image the three figures are of virtually identical stature. Since the page representing the emperor was intended to

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Spatharakis recognizes as bread is more likely an irregularity of the die. No traces of a beard can be found on other numismatic representations of Constantine; for a critic of Spatharakis' argument, also see Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," p. 20. Grierson and more recently Tougher argued that Constantine was likely Basil's son not from his first marriage as has been assumed by modern scholars but from his marriage to Eudokia Ingerina (as attested by ninth century sources); Tougher also argued for a possibly earlier date for Basil and Eudokia's marriage, and suggested that Constantine may have been born in 864, thus would have been only fourteen or fifteen years old at the time of his death, see Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973) III/, 2, p. 474; Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 43-44. Spatharakis's other observation that the diadem on the drawing on f.Bv is thinner and simpler than on f.Cv and thereby indicates a person of lower rank lacks persuasive force, see Spatharakis, "A Note on the Imperial Portraits and the Date of Par. Gr. 510," p. 91.

[16] Kalavrezou recognized part of the head of the second figure under the flaking paint and as it was consistent with the appearance of Elijah on the final version, she concluded that it was most likely Elijah on the preliminary version too. Kalavrezou proposed that the presence of the prophet is explained by Basil's personal devotion to Elijah; see Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," p. 19-22; Burbaker endorsed this view, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 6; Omont also identified the drawing as a representation of Basil and Gabriel, see Omont, *Fac-similés des miniatures des plus anicens manuscits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIe siècle* , p. 13. For the same view, see Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," p. 198, although she identified the archangel as Michael. Basil's devotion to Elijah stemmed from the prophecy in which Elijah foretold his accession to the throne, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , p. 325. For the churches Basil dedicated to Elijah, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp. 308, 319, 325, 329, 337; for the feast of Elijah, see Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1935) Ch. 28(19), pp. 106-109. For a discussion of Basil's devotion to Elijah, see Paul Magdalino, "Basil I, Leo VI, and the Feast of the Prophet Elijah," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988): pp. 193-96.

[17] Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," p. 22-23; for Elijah's prophecy and Basil's devotion to him, also see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium* , pp. 192-198.

face the page showing the empress, it would have been an awkward composition if the emperor were shorter than his companions whereas the empress towered over her sons.

On f.Br Eudokia Ingerina and her two sons Leo and Alexander appear identified by inscriptions above their heads: *Eudokia Augusta*, *Leo despotes* and *Alexandros d* (Fig. 147).[18] The figures wear the same attire as Basil and Gabriel on the previous page, the jewel-studded *loros* over the purple tunic and red buskins with pearls, and stand on a *suppedion*. The position of their feet indicates that the boys stand at the front of the podium, while Eudokia is a step behind them. All three are holding orbs without crosses[19] in their left hands. As the orb was a symbol of actual power, it is unusual that an empress is depicted holding it.[20] Eudokia also holds a long scepter terminating in a bud-shaped ornament in her right hand while the boys carry the *akakia* in their right hands. The faces of the junior emperors are well preserved; they are shown with red cheeks and small, poutty red lips. Leo has an oval visage while his brother's triangular face is narrower. They both have shoulder-length chestnut brown hair. Alexander glances to his right, toward Eudokia, while Leo appears to be looking straight. Eudokia's face and crown are almost completely flaked off. The following inscription frames the page: "Basil, the king of the Romans, elevated you, a well-branched vine bearing as the

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[18] Brubaker and Kalaverzou suggest that Alexander is also given the title *despotes*, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 5, and Kalavrezou-Maxeiner, "The Portraits of Basil I in Paris Gr. 510," p. 21. For the reading of Alexander's title as *adelphos*, see Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," p. 98 and Omont, *Fac-similés des miniatures des plus anicens manuscits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIe siècle* , p. 12; in a later article Spatharakis changed his position and accepted a reading of *despotes* as the title of Alexander, see Spatharakis, "A Note on the Imperial Portraits and the Date of Par. Gr. 510," p. 90. On Leo's parentage, see the opposing views of Cyril Mango, "Eudokia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty," *Zbornik Radova* XIV-XV (1973): pp. 17-27 and Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 42-67. Also see Karlin-Hayter's analysis regarding the political significance of officially circulated rumors about Leo's parentage, Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe s," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991), pp. 85-111.

[19] The orb held by Alexander is badly flaked, and was originally covered over by the frame containing the inscription.

[20] For a discussion of the globe, see Percy Ernst Schramm, *Sphaira, Globus, Reichsapfel* (Stuttgart: 1958), pp. 24-28; Josef Deér, "Der Globus des spätrömischen und des byzantinischen Kaisers. Symbol oder Insignie?," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 54 (1961): pp. 53-85, 291-318; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, pp. 131-133. Schramm's work is reviewed by André Grabar, "Zur Geschichte von Sphaira, Globus und Reichsapfel," *Historische Zeitschrift* 191 (1960): pp. 336-48.

grapes of sovereignty the serene despotai with whom you shine, oh light-bringing Eudokia."[21] The empress' position is well defined by the inscription: she received her status because of her elevation by the emperor and her most important function is to bear imperial heirs for the establishment of Basil's new dynasty.[22] The representation of Eudokia between the heirs is part of Basil's imperial propaganda by which he introduced his new dynasty and its claim for power. Perhaps the appearance of the orb in the hand of Eudokia is related to Basil's dynastic propaganda: an attempt to establish a lineage for the sons by depicting them as rightful heirs of the throne as both of their imperial parents possessed power. Eudokia's figure thus provides a second link through which the empire can be bestowed upon the next generation and clearly serves as means of dynastic propaganda in the imagery of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.

Two further images of the manuscript contain representations of Helena, the first Christian empress. The illumination on f.285r represents the vision of Habakkuk (Fig. 151).[23] The upper part of the page shows the vision, while the lower part of the composition renders four figures witnessing the event: Gregory and Habakkuk on the right, and the saints Paraskeve and Helena on the left. This image accompanies Gregory's *Second Homily on Easter*, although the text makes no mention of either Helena or Paraskeve.[24] The border on the top of the page carries the inscription: "Today is salvation come into the world," a passage derived from Gregory's sermon.[25] Praskeve is

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[21] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 98; *ΕΥΚΛΗΜΑΤΟΥCΑΝ ΑΜΠΕΛΟΝ CΕ ΤΟΥ ΚΡΑΤΟΥC ΒΟΤΡΥC ΦΕΡΟΥCΑΝ ΤΟΥC ΓΑΛΗΝΟΥC ΔΕCΠΟΤΑC ΒΑCΙΛΕΙΟC ΠΡΟΗΞΕ ΡωΜΑΙωΝ ΑΝΑΞ ΜΕΘ'ωΝ ΠΡΟΛΑΜΠΕΙC ΕΥΔΟΚΙΑ ΦΟCΦΟΡΟC.* Brubaker translates the passages as follows: "Basil, emperor of the Romans, precedes you, the well-branched vineyard bearing the grapes of the empire, the gentle despotes. With them you shine forth, light-bearing Eudokia." See Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 162, who also noted that the last expression links the empress with Venus.

[22] For comments about the dynastic nature of this representation, see André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936), p. 127.

[23] Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," pp. 201-202. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium : Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 134, 205-207, 284-286. Also see Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Note sur quelques images se rattachant au thème du Christ-ange," *Cahiers Archéologiques* XIII (1962a): pp. 209-16, especially p. 212.

[24] See PG 36:624-664; for English translation of the homily, see Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, *A Selected Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ser. 2,7* (New York: 1894), pp. 422-434.

[25] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 285.

dressed in a brown *maphorion* and holds the *arma Christi*, the lance, sponge, nails and a bucket of vinegar, while Helena clad in the *loros* carries a rectangular model of the tomb of Christ in front of her bosom. Her crown and bonnet recalls sixth century representations of female imperial headgear rather than what appears to have been typical in the ninth century.[26] Yet Helena's *loros* is nearly identical to the *loroi* shown on the imperial portraits on f.Br and Cv. The appearance of the two female figures in an illustration of the vision of Habakkuk is unique to this manuscript, and this is the first extant representation of Saint Paraskeve in Byzantine art.[27] The patriarch Photios, the patron of this manuscript, was interested in and described in some detail the appearance of the Holy Sepulcher, and his knowledge of the physical characteristics of Christ's tomb, now doubt, informed this representation.[28] Grabar suggested that the empress Helena embodies Easter Sunday in this representation as she carries a model of the tomb of Christ and for this reason she is paired with Paraskeve, the embodiment of Good Friday.[29] This view may be confirmed and strengthened by an analysis of the significance of Helena' garments. Helena is shown in the *loros*, a garment almost exclusively associated with the celebration of Easter in the ceremonial practice of the Byzantine court. The *Book of Ceremonies* drafted by the grandson of Basil I informs us about the meanings associated with the *loros*; the text mentions that the *loros* was derived from the dress of the consul[30] and since the celebration of the consulate was moved from January 1 to Easter by the eighth century, a clear connection was established between the triumphal

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[26] For a discussion of head-covers of empresses, see Melita Emmanuel, "Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses, and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* 4/17 (1993-94): pp. 113-28.

[27] Paraskeve is a fictitious saint who personifies Good Friday and her feast days fell on 26 July, 8-9 November, see ODB III, p. 1586; also see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 205.

[28] See L. G. Westernik, *Photii Patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Epistulae et Amphilochia, vols. 4-6, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Leipzig: 1986-1987), pp. 122-124, quoted and translated in Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 207. For an English translation of Photios' text, also see J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Warminster: 1977), p. 146. Regarding the interest of Photios and other ninth century writers in sites of the Holy Land, see Kathleen Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 94-103, 133.

[29] André Grabar, "L'iconographie du dimanche, principalment à Byzance," in *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge* (Paris: 1968), pp. 561-568, especially p. 567.

[30] Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829) II, ch. 40, pp. 637-639. For commentary see: J. D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, vol. 144, *Numismatic Notes and Monographs* (New York: 1959), pp. 36-37.

dress of the consul and the feast of Easter.[31] Moreover, the *Book of Ceremonies* also mentions that the emperor wore the *loros* during the celebration of Easter while twelve officials accompanied him also clad in the *loros*. In this ceremonial the *loros* signified the burial shroud of Christ and the miracle of his resurrection, and transformed the emperor into an image of Christ on earth.[32] Although the textual evidence for the meaning of the *loros* in the middle Byzantine period comes down to us in a manuscript two generations younger than Basil I, it is likely that such associations were already attached to the *loros* in the ninth century. Helena's pilgrimage to the Holy Land and her reported role in the discovery of the True Cross explains why she would be included in the image. Her presence and her emphatically contemporary imperial attire link the celebration of Easter and the resurrection of Christ with female imperial authority and with notions of imperial triumph reflecting upon the current ruling family.

F.440r presents three imperial scenes in three registers:[33] the dream of Constantine the Great, his vision at the Milvian Bridge and his defeat of Maxentius, and the invention of the true cross by his mother Helena (Fig. 152).[34] In the lowest register

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[31] See Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II* , p. 43.

[32] George P. Galavaris, "The Symbolism of the Imperial Costume as Displayed on Byzantine Coins," *ANS Museum Notes* 8 (1958): pp. 99-117, especially p. 111. Also see Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* II, ch. 40, pp. 638, II, ch. 52, pp. 765-66.

[33] The imagery accompanies a text of Gregory Thaumaturgos entitled "Metaphrase of Ecclesiastes." PG 10, pp. 987-1018; for translation, see Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325.* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1956-1962), VI, also available at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-06/anf06-08.htm#P282_34583. Burbaker underscored that it is not certain that the miniature on f.440r was the last one of the manuscript, as the codex is incomplete, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 168; she also noted that the imagery provides an illustration of the text by analogy rather than direct illustration, as the text describes the religious awakening of Solomon and provides an excursus on the persona of the righteous ruler, see ibid., p. 169.

[34] Jean Ebersolt, *La miniature byzantine* (Paris: 1926), p. 22; H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens mansucrits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIVe siècle* (Paris: 1929), p. 31, pl. LIX, Kurt Weitzmann, "Illustrations for the Chronicles of Sozomenos, Theodoret and Malalas," *Byzantion* 16 (1942-43): pp. 87-134, especially pp. 126-28; Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," pp. 219-221; Robin Cormack and Ernst Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia in Istanbul: The Rooms Above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977): pp. 177-251, especially pp. 240-1; Christopher Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church, Birmingham Byzantine Series I* (London: 1982), pp. 148-9; Andreas Schminck, "'Rota tu volubilis,' Kaisermacht und Patriarchenmacht in Mosaiken," in *Cupido Legum*, ed. Ludwig Burgmann, Marie Theres Fögen, and Andreas Schminck (Frankfurt: 1985), pp. 211-34, especially pp. 217, 232; Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "L'image du pouvoir dans l'art Byzantin," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): pp. 441-70, especially p. 457; Leslie Brubaker, "To Legitimize an Emperor," in *New Constantines* (St. Andrews: 1994),

Helena appears twice. First she is shown enthroned frontally on a lyre-backed throne reaching with her right hand toward a group of men while she holds a globus cruciger in her left hand over her lap; two young man carrying jewel-encrusted staffs approach her from the right. The empress is identified by the legend: *he Hagia Helene*. In the second scene Helena is shown standing in three-quarter profile and reaching out toward the hole that contains the cross while emphatically gesticulating men witness the event.[35] The following inscription appears above the scene: "finding of the true cross." The three scenes clearly link the triumphal cross with imperial power and weave together two different types of imperial potencies in the promotion of the cross: the military triumph of the emperor inspired by a vision of the cross, and Helena's ability to find and identify the physical relic of the true cross. The vision of the cross and the finding of its physical remains are also linked directly with the defeat of Maxentius. The slaying of Maxentius sandwiched between the visionary cross hovering in heaven and the real cross found in the depth of the earth may have been read in two ways by contemporaries; on the one hand the pagan Maxentius was clearly set up against the orthodox Constantine emphatically underscoring the triumph of orthodox doctrine in Byzantium (possibly even containing anti-iconoclast overtones),[36] on the other hand, Constantine's victory over his rival may have also been understood as an allusion to the justified murder of Basil's predecessor, Michael III, after all, both Constantine the Great and Basil I ascended the throne after the slaying of their imperial rival.

Helena wears the same crown and headdress on f.440r as on f.285r, but here she appears in a purple *chlamys* rather than the *loros*. In Brubaker's view this change in attire reflects the different natures of the representations of Helena in the two images, as

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pp. 139-58, especially pp. 147-149; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , pp. 163-169.

[35] Burbaker, following Weitzmann, identified the figure immediately to the right of the enthroned Helena as the bishop of Jerusalem, Makarios, who appears again kneeling by the pit in the second scene, see Weitzmann, "Illustrations for the Chronicles of Sozomenos, Theodoret and Malalas," , especially pp. 126-8; Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 164.

[36] For the orthodox message communicated in the representation of Constantine on horseback slaying his enemy in the Chludov Psalter, see Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , pp. 1665-167.

the earlier folio shows an iconic image, while the later presents a narrative.[37] It is however more likely that the variance in attire reflects different concerns; Helena is shown on f.440r in the customary dress of empresses of the early Byzantine period, while on f.285r she is shown in the *loros* on account of the symbolic connection between Easter and this imperial attire.

Scholars have recognized that the pictorial correspondences between the image of Eudokia Ingerina and those of Saint Helena likely aimed at presenting Eudokia as the new Helena by the side of Basil I, the new Constantine.[38] Brubaker also drew attention to the important developments of the sixth-eights centuries that led to a tight interweaving of the stories of Constantine's vision and triumph and Helena's discovery of the true cross, reflected in the imagery of Paris gr. 510.[39] The intertwining of the stories of Constantine and Helena is demonstrated for instance by the prayer sung at the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross:[40]

> O Cross, luminous sign among the stars, you showed in advance a trophy of victory to the most pious King; having found you, his mother Helena made of you the adornment of the world. In exalting you on this day, we, the choir of the faithful cry out: 'Light us with your splendor, O vivifying cross; sanctify us by your virtue, O most venerable cross, and fortify us by your exaltation, you who have raised against the army of our enemies.[41]

Brubaker placed the visual importance of Constantine and Helena in the Paris manuscript into the broader intellectual and visual trend of the reign of Basil I, what she termed the "reclaiming" of Constantine's figure from iconoclast propaganda, as exemplified by the

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[37] Ibid. , p. 164.

[38] Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," p. 221; Jolivet-Lévy, "L'image du pouvoir dans l'art Byzantin," p. 457. Indeed, celebrating empresses as the new Helena is a frequent Byzantine topos, Irene and her son Constantine VI were celebrated as new Constantine and Helena in the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea, while Eudokia Ingerina was praised as new Helena in the Acts of the Eighth Ecumenical Council, see PL 129, p. 170.

[39] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , pp. 164-165.

[40] For the liturgy of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, see Juan S. I. Mateos, "Le Typicon de la Grande Église," *Orientalia Crhistiana Analecta* 165-166 (1962), pp. 25-33.

[41] Quoted by Der Nersessian, "The Illustration of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Paris Gr. 510. A Study of the Connections Between Text and Images," p. 219; Der Nersessian also drew attention to the representation of the imperial family adoring the cross at the Kainourgion, ibid., p. 220.

mosaics executed in the vestibule of Hagia Sophia that included an image of Constantine and quite possibly Helena.[42]

Menologion of Basil II and the Promotion of Female Saints of the Ninth Century

The Menologion of Basil II dated c. 1000 contains representations of two female imperial saints of the middle Byzantine period: on f.392 Theodora, the wife of Theophilos and on f.249 Theophano, the first wife of Leo VI.[43] Theodora appears in frontal position standing in front of a fanciful arched structure with curtains and holds a round image with a bust of Christ in her left hand while she lifts her right hand towards the viewer in a gesture of blessing (Figs. 153-154).[44] The faces of the empress and Christ have been worn off. Theodora wears a dark purple robe with baggy sleeves decorated

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[42] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 167. For a discussion of the mosaics of the vestibule, see Cormack and Hawkins, "The Mosaics of St. Sophia in Istanbul: The Rooms Above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp," pp. 230-231, 235-246. For a discussion of the re-interpretation or rehabilitation of the role of the cross after iconoclasm, see Natalia Teteriatnikov, "The True Cross Flanked by Constantine and Helena. A Study in the Light of the Post-Iconoclastic Re-evaluation of the Cross," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* 4 (1995): pp. 169-88.

[43] Vatican gr. 1613, tempera on vellum, 272 folios, 36.5x28.5 cm. See, Pio Franchi De' Cavalieri, *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613), Codices e Vaticanis selecti, VIII* (Torino: 1907); Der Nersessian noted that the Menologion of Basil II did not mention events or saints who lived in the tenth century, with the exception of St. Luke the Stylite on page 238, who died during the reign of Basil II in 979, see: Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Remarks on the Date of the Menologium and the Psalter Written for Basil II," *Byzantion* 15 (1940-41): pp. 104-25, especially pp. 106-111. Therefore, the death of St. Luke the Stylite in 979 and the lack of any reference to the earthquake in 989 in Constantinople suggested to Der Nersessian that the Menologion of Basil II should be dated between 979 and 989, most likely between 986 and 989, see ibid., p. 112. Cutler accepted the *terminus post quem* in 979, and also argued that there is a close stylistic connection between Basil's menologion and the Psalter of Basil II traditionally dated to ca. 1018. Based on numismatic evidence Cutler advanced an alternate date for the Psalter of Basil II c. 1001-1005, a date close to the suggested date of the Menologion, see Anthony Cutler, "The Psalter of Basil II," *Arte Veneta* XXX, XXXI (1976-77): pp. 9-19, 9-15. Also see, Ihor Sevcenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): pp. pp. 243-76; Jens Rohmann, "Die Miniaturen des Vatikanischen Menologions. Zur Problematik ihrer Namensbeischriften.," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 249-65, with four plates; for a description and recent bibliography see Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), pp. 100-101.

[44] For an illustration of the full page, see Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), fig. 131; for a color illustration of the imperial image and a discussion of this page, see Claude Mutafian, *Roma - Armenia* (Rome: 1999), IV, 17, p. 102. Also see De' Cavalieri, *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613)* , I, p. 107, and Spyridon Lampros, *Leukoma Byzantinon Autokratoron* (Athens: 1930). An inscription on the margin of the page identifies the illuminator as George.

with heart-shaped patterns and with wide golden roundels. Above her robe she dons the golden *loros* terminating in a *thorakion* adorned with a cross outlined by pearls. Theodora's crown is elaborate with triangular projections and pendilia.[45] The text accompanying the image of Theodora provides a brief commemoration for her feast day on February 11. It states:

> The blessed empress Theodora became the wife of the iconoclast emperor Theophilos; she was not a heretic even though her husband was. He exiled the holy patriarch of Constantinople, Methodios and made instead John Lekonomatin the patriarch, and burned the holy images. She did not have the courage to venerate the images openly, nevertheless she had them hidden in her room, and at night she took them out and venerated them, and she called out to god so that he would create compassion for orthodox believers. She had a son Michael, to whom she taught the orthodox faith. After the death of her husband she recalled saint Methodios and convoked a holy synod, anathematized the iconoclasts and removed John from the [patriarchal] throne, and restored the holy images to the churches. After accomplishing this she bequeathed the empire to her son Michael.[46]

Theodora's *synaxis* emphasizes her orthodoxy and role in the restoration of images.

Theophano appears standing as a frontal figure with outstretched arms in front of a cityscape (Fig. 155-156).[47] She has a young, oval face with regular features and wears a long purple tunic with tight sleeves and bejeweled cuffs. Above the tunic Theophano wears a purple *chlamys* adorned with a row of five roundels on its front. The inside of the *chlamys* is scarlet just like her shoes.[48] An impressive, tall crown decked with

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[45] For a detailed description, see De' Cavalieri, *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613)* , I, p. 107.

[46] See PG 117, pp. 307-308.

[47] De' Cavalieri, *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613)* , I, p. 68. The image is also reproduced in Lampros, *Leukoma Byzantinon Autokratoron* , who erroneously identifies the figure as Theodosia, wife of Leo V (813-820), and Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , fig. 109. A brief note 'of the same [artist]' appears on the margin, identifying the artist of the page as the illuminator Symeon. Scholars have disagreed on the function of the marginal notes providing the names of eight individuals (Pantaleon, Nestor, Michael the Younger, Michael of Blachernia, Symeon of Blachernai, George, Symeon, Menas). Frolow argued that these names refer to artists whose works were used as prototypes for the illuminations of Basil's Menologion, Anatole Frolow, "L'origine des miniatures du Ménologe du Vatican," *Zbornik Radova* VI (1960): pp. 29-41. Ševčenko based on a codicological analysis, and more recently Rohman based on a stylistic analysis of the depiction of capitals, argued convincingly that the marginal names must refer to the artists who produced the actual miniatures of Basil's Menologion. See Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," especially pp. 249-260, and Rohmann, "Die Miniaturen des Vatikanischen Menologions. Zur Problematik ihrer Namensbeischriften."

[48] Theophano is described as wearing a *chlamys* in a vision reported in the Life of Theophano. In this vision she appeared together with the Mother of God and with the mother of the person experiencing the

precious stones and pearls, and terminating in three triangular plaques placed over a headdress and a veil covers her head. Simple pearl earrings complete her jewelry.[49] The text accompanying her image provides a brief commemoration for her feast day on December 16:

> On the same day we remember the blessed Theophano, the wife of our famous and most wise emperor Leo. The blessed queen Theophano was an empress of Constantinopolitan origin, for she was the daughter of the *illustris* Constantine, who was related to three emperors. Her mother was called Anna. Anna was barren and childless till very late [in her life], like the mother of the prophet Samuel. But together with her husband she often made offerings and called out for help to our holy queen, the Theotokos, who was honored at the church in the Bassos. Thus she conceived in her womb the holy Theophano. The child (who was begotten in this way) was brought up virtuously and was taught to read and write. And when the famous emperor Basil decided [to find] a wife for his son Leo the most wise, not finding a better candidate than her, he married her to him. She was crowned and became empress, yet [even now] the beggars had not escaped her notice, but she retained her familiar virtue and charity, she served god, and thus she was given the heavenly kingdom.[50]

The author emphasizes Theophano's lineage, her conception aided by the Theotokos, her marriage to Leo the Wise, and her charity through which she attained sanctity. It does not refer to the healing miracles performed by Theophano's relics, so emphatically described in the surviving vitae of Theophano, and also mentioned by the historian Leo Grammaticus (c. 963-69).[51]

The effigies of Theodora and Theophano fit into the larger pattern of imperial patronage of dynastic saints and attempts at imperial canonization by members of the Macedonian dynasty. Basil II's interest in these empresses may have also been prompted by a personal affinity, for they shared the names of his mother and aunt. Basil's mother

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vision, see Eduard ed. Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," *Mémoires de L'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg, VIIIe série* III, no. 2 (1898): I-XI, pp. 1-132, *Life of Theophano*, ch. 29, p. 20/32.

[49] For a more elaborate description see De' Cavalieri, *Il Menologio di Basilio II (Cod. Vaticano Greco 1613)*, I, 68.

[50] PG 117, pp. 209-210.

[51] I. Bekker, *Leo Grammaticus, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: 1842), p. 270/15-18, reports that following her funeral miracles started to happen at her tomb "because of her lack of jealousy and bitterness and because she had devoted herself to charity and prayers and constantly lived for God, spending her time in the holy churches." Quoted in L. Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?," *Eranos* 83 (1985): pp. 175-91, especially p. 183.

was called Anastasia-Theophano,[52] and his aunt, the second wife of the emperor John Tzimiskes (969-76), who ruled before Basil reached maturity, was named Theodora.[53] It is possible that Basil's female relatives considered Sts. Theodora and Theophano as their patron saints, and thus were included in the menologion.[54] Basil never married,[55] and Theophano and Theodora were the two imperial women close to him. Theophano may have even been living at the court at the time of the production of the manuscript, since George the Monk reported that she lived until 1013.[56] Although it is not clear whether Basil II was the recipient or the commissioner of the menologion,[57] a close connection with the emperor is attested by the dedicatory inscription on folio A of the manuscript:

> Do thou, O beholder, duly contemplate here the most exquisite works, made of the best deeds [?], a most beautiful work of God, astounding to the mind, a work which, with reason, fills the whole Creation with joy. For above, Himself as God and Lord,

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[52] She was the daughter of a publican, the wife of Romanos II (959-63) and later of Nikephorus Phokas (963-969). For Theophano, see Gustave Schlumberger, *Un Empereur Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: 1890); Joseph McCabe, *The Empresses of Constantinople* (Boston: 1913), pp. 136-157; Charles Diehl, *Byzantine Portraits*, trans. Harold Bell (New York: 1927), pp. 206-230; George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers Universty Press, 1957), pp. 284-285, 293; Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 126-135. She was exiled form the palace after the death of Nikephoros Phokas, but was recalled after death of John Tzimiskes. The continuator of George the Monk says that she lived for 50 years after the death of her first husband in 963. Leo Diaconus reports about the marriage of the formerly tonsured Theodora (daughter of Constantine VII) to Tzimiskes, see C. B. Hase, *Leo Diaconus, Corpus Sciptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: 1828), p. 127.

[53] For Theodora, see Mark Walter Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" (Ph. D. dissertation, The Catholic Univeristy of America, 1986), p. 85.

[54] However, one needs to keep in mind Cotsonis's observations about the connections of names and selection of patron saints. He established that there is no necessary connection between the name of the seal's owner and the selection of patron saint depicted on the seal. Although there are examples where the owner of the seal and the patron saint share the same name, this is not necessarily the case. Cotsonis states: "It is commonly assumed that patrons of objects intended for religious use often include on their donation a depiction of their homonymous saint as an expression of personal piety, guardianship, etc." He argues, based on the evidence offered by lead seals that his notion should be applied with caution especially in the analysis of objects whose patrons are unknown. See John Alexander Cotsonis, "A Society and Its Images: The Religious Iconography of Byzantine Lead Seals" (Ph. D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1992), pp. 255-262. For a discussion of the connection of naming patterns and the cult of the saints, see Paul Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium" (Ph. D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1999), pp. 50-55.

[55] For a discussion of Basil's marital status and his vow of celibacy see: Martin Arbagi, "The Celibacy of Basil II," *Byzantine Studies* II, no. 1 (1975): pp. 41-45. Nikephoros Phokas planned a marriage alliance for his two stepsons with the daughters of the Bulgarian king, but this never materialized, see Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* , p. 292, no. 3.

[56] He reported that she lived 50 years after the death of her first husband in 963.

[57] Barbara Crostini, "The Emperor Basil II's Cultural Life," *Byzantion* 66, no. 1 (1996): pp. 55-80, especially p. 70.

> who has painted the Heavens with a circling motion of stars – the Heavens which, by His Word, He stretched out like a curtain of leather (cf. Ps. 103:2) – illuminates the World through his all-wise forethought. Below, Basil, the one who mirrors Him in his character, ruler of the whole earth, Sun of the purple, reared in purple robes, excelling both in victories and in learning, gladdens the minds of all the Orthodox and cheers all contemplation with delight, having created a book truly like unto another Heaven, stretched out from sheets of leather provided by Nature. This book contains beautiful images like stars: first, of the Word, both God and Man, then of the Mother who gave immaculate birth; of wise prophets, [martyrs, and apostles, of all the righteous] of the orthodox ones, of angels and archangels. In all those whom he has portrayed in colors, may he find active helpers, sustainers of the State, allies in battles, deliverers from sufferings, healers in sickness, and above all, eager mediators before the Lord at the time of Judgment, and providers of ineffable glory and the Kingdom of God.[58]

It has been convincingly argued that the first section of the poem describes a now lost miniature intended to decorate folio C or page I that depicted the emperor Basil with the ultimate source of his power, Christ above him.[59] An image similar to the one described in the dedicatory poem of the Menologion of Basil II survives in the Psalter of Basil II in Venice (Fig. 157).[60] That we should imagine the direct influence of Basil or his circle on selecting Theodora and Theophano for his Menologion is underscored by the fact that none of the other so-called imperial menologia to which Basil's Menologion is related

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[58] Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," pp. 272-273. A *synaxarium* dating to the twelfth century (Paris gr. 1589) contains a dedicatory text similar to that of the Menologion of Basil II. Delehaye concluded from the similarity of the two texts that the Menologion of Basil II must have been a copy of a *synaxarium* also made for Basil, see Hyppolite Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye, Acta Sanctorum, LXI, 1. Propyleum ad Acta Sanctroum Novembris.* (Bruxelles: 1902). Der Nersessian argued that the *synaxarium* on which Basil's Menologion is based must also have been illuminated based on the evidence provided by the dedicatory poem. She believes, however, that it is unlikely that two illustrated copies of a *synaxarium* would have been produced for the same emperor and suggested that the *synaxarium* which served as a prototype for the Menologion of Basil II was executed during the reign of Leo VI, see Der Nersessian, "Remarks on the Date of the Menologium and the Psalter Written for Basil II," pp. 114, 115, 125. Ševčenko also believes that the imagery of the Menologion was based on miniatures of a *synaxarium* predating the production of Basil's Menologion, see Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," p. 274, n. 100., and p. 275, n. 103.

[59] Ševčenko, "The Illuminators of the Menologium of Basil II," , p. 273. Also see Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, "The Walters "Imperial" Menologion," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 51 (1993): pp. 43-64, especially p. 60.

[60] Biblioteca Marciana gr. 17, f. IIv.

contain Theodora's or Theophano's commemoration, as far as it can be ascertained from the surviving evidence.[61]

Clearly, the inclusion of the images of Sts. Theophano and Theodora in the Menologion of Basil II attests to the promotion of female imperial saints for the benefit of the Macedonian dynasty. The figure of Theodora links the Macedonian dynasty to the previous dynasty of the Amorians and to a prominent opponent of the iconoclasts, while the figure of Theophano attests to the efforts of the dynasty to elevate its members to sanctity. To explore the significance of these two imperial women further, a brief excursus is necessary.

Saints Theodora and Theophano

The *Life and Encomium of the Blessed and Holy Empress Theodora*[62] was most likely written in the late ninth century by an author whose identity had not been possible to establish.[63] It has been argued that the Life was composed as "an inaugural sermon"

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[61] The Menologion of Basil II related to the group called imperial menologia since the miniatures of Basil's Menologion served as models for the Walters Imperial Menologion (eleventh century, for the month of January). The texts of Basil's Menologion, however, are different from the texts contained in the imperial menologia, and are closely related to the Synaxarium of Constantinople, while the texts of the imperial menologia are abbreviated versions of the Metaphrastian vitae, see Patterson Ševčenko, "The Walters "Imperial" Menologion," , pp. 59-61. For the texts of Basil's Menologion, see PG 117:20-332. An eleventh century menologion for the months February and March now in Moscow (Historical Museum, Moscow, cod. gr. 183) does not commemorate the empress Theodora on February 11 as does the Menologion of Basil II, see D. K. Tréneff, *Miniatures du ménologe grec du XI-me siècle No. 183 de la Bibliothèque Synodale à Moscou* (Moscou: 1911), p. 7, fig. 10; Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "Moskovskii Menologii," in *Vizantija, Juznye slavjane i Drevnjaja Rus, Zapadnaja Europa. Sbornik statej v. cest V. N. Lazareva* (Moscow: 1973), pp. 94-111. Another imperial menologion in the Benaki Museum of Athens contains texts for February 17-21 and December 21, thus it cannot be used as evidence to test whether they originally included images of Theodora and Theophano. There are eight other, non-illuminated imperial menologia containing vitae for February through March, four from the Byzantine period. None of them, however, contain imperial female saints: Athos, Kutlumus 23, twelfth century, February, March, some April and May; Athens, BN gr. 982 and Athos, Protaton 47, 1598-9, February-May; Patmos 736, fourteenth century, April-May; Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate Taphou 17, twelfth century, June-August; Athos Dionysiou 83 of 1142, June-August; Athens.BN gr. 1046, fourteenth century, June-August; Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate Stavrou 16, 16th c., June-August, and the Benaki cod. 71, Feburary 17-21, and December 21, see Patterson Ševčenko, "The Walters "Imperial" Menologion," , p. 62, no. 20, no. 22.

[62] Theodora's feast day is February 11, the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

[63] BHG 1731; Alenxander Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995): pp. 45-56, no. 13. For the Greek text, see W. Regel, "Récit sur l'empereur Théophile et l'impératrices Théodora concernant le rétablissment du culte des saintes images," *Analecta Byzantino-Russica* (1891): pp. 1-43, especially pp. 1-19, and A.

introducing the Feast of Orthodoxy into the church calendar some time after 867.[64] Although the circumstances of Theodora's elevation to sainthood are not known, the evidence provided by the Life suggests that she was introduced into the Orthodox Church as a saint soon after her death, some time in the latter part of the ninth century.[65] Vinson has shown the important role the figure of Theodora assumed in pro-Macedonian propaganda, and suggested that

> . . . the evidence provided by both the from and content of the Life indicates that this work was authorized at the very highest level of the political and religious establishment. It suggests moreover that the cult of Theodora was instituted as a means of demonstrating the orthodoxy, and hence the legitimacy, of a regime which overthrew the dynasty that conquered iconoclasm.[66]

Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," *Symmeikta* 5 (1983): pp. 249-85; for a recent English translation, see Martha P. Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eigth Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation II* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), pp. 360-82. The text of the vita survives in three manuscripts. The earliest is found in the British Museum (Add. 28270, ff. 1-16v), and was completed on 3 August 1111 by the copyist Nicolaos, according to the information provided by the scribe himself. This manuscript also indicates that the vita was intended "For the Sunday of Orthodoxy," see Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," p. 255-257, and Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), p. 354. A second manuscript is found in the Messina Biblioteca Universitaria (San Salvatore 30, ff. 227-232v), and was completed by the monk David in 1307, see Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," p. 255, no. 7 and Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 354. Finally, the thirteenth century manuscript in the Vatican Library (2014, ff. 136v-143) does not contain the full text of the vita, see Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," p. 256, no. 1.

[64] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 354. Dating is based on the fact that Michael III, who was assassinated in 867, is referred to in the text as deceased, although without mentioning his name. Markopoulos suggested a date between 867-871 for the composition of the vita, see Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)." The Feast of Orthodoxy is mentioned in the *Kletorologion of Philotheos* (dating to 899), see J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (New York: 1911), pp. 165-166 and Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* (Paris: 1972), pp. 194-195, with French translation; the feast is also mentioned in the tenth century Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch, 28, pp. 156-60.

[65] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," pp. 354-355. For further discussion of various aspects of the *Life of Theodora*, see Martha Vinson, "The Terms enkolpion and tenantion and the Conversion of Theophilus in the Life of Theodora (BHG 1731)," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 36, no. 1 (1995): pp. 89-99; Martha Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 31-60.

[66] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 356. Vinson demonstrated that the Life of Theodora is a *basilikos logos* according to the rules of Menander Rhetor, see Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 353; Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," especially pp. 31, 35-37.

There is also a so-called second redaction of Theodora's Life,[67] and she is commemorated in the *Synaxarium of Constantinople*,[68] and in the *Synodikon of Orthodoxy*,[69] and hymns were also dedicated to her.[70] An extensive discussion of the role of Theodora in the restoration of icons was also included into the *Life of Irene of Chrysobalanton*, an imaginary saint of the late tenth century.[71] No information is available about Theodora's relics and none of the sources record post-humus miracles performed by her. Considering the importance of Theodora in the defeat of Iconoclasm and the restoration of images, her position at the head of the list of salutations read aloud annually at the Feast of Orthodoxy, as well as the significance of her figure for the ideology of the emerging Macedonian dynasty, it is striking to note the rarity of her images as a saint in the Byzantine period.[72] No middle Byzantine images of her survive beyond the one included in the Menologion of Basil II; she appears as a member of the gallery of saints in a fourteenth century fresco of the Church of the Virgin Gouverniotissa on Crete, and she is represented together with her son on an icon from ca. 1400 depicting the Feast of Orthodoxy.[73] There also survive several examples of the icon of the Feast of Orthodoxy from the post-Byzantine period.[74]

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[67] F. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monothelitarum* (Paris: 1648), pp. 715E-743A.

[68] Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , pp. 458-459.

[69] Jean Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, Édition et commentaire," *Travaux et Mémoires* 2 (1967): pp. 1-316, pp. 93/768-69, 97/801-2.

[70] See E. Follieri, *Initia hymnorum ecclesiae graecae 5-2* (Vatican: 1966), p. 124.

[71] BHG 952, Jan Olof Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* (Uppsala: 1986), ch. 1-3, pp. 3-13.

[72] No images of Theodora were found in Cappadocian church decorations in the publications of Restle and Jolivet-Levy, or in Cypriot church decorations in the publication of Stylianou, Marcell Restle, *Byzantine Wall Painting in Asia Minor* (Greenwich, Connecticut: 1967); Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, *Les églises byzantines de Cappadoce. Le programme iconographique de l'abside et de ses abords* (Paris: 1991); Andreas Stylianou and Judith A. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus: Treasures of Byzantine Art* (London: 1985). More research is needed on church decoration in mainland Greece and on the Balkans.

[73] For the fresco, see Maria Vassilakis-Mavrakakis, "The Church of the Virgin Gouvernitissa at Patomios, Crete," (Ph. D. dissertation, Courtauld Institue of Art, London Univeristy, 1986), pp. 247-248; however, it must be noted that the representation of Theodora in imperial robes is part of a group of female saints all of whom are represented in imperial attire, Marina, Catherine, and Barbara (?), Photeine, Paraskeve (?), Kyriake (?), and Irene (?), although only Catherine was an imperial saint. Thus it is unclear whether the saint Theodora represented here should be identified with the ninth century empress. For the Feast of Orthodoxy icon in the British Museum, see Yanni Petsopoulos, *East Christian Art* (London: 1987), no. 43, pp. 49-50; Robin Cormack, "The Triumph of Orthodoxy," in *National Art Collections Fund Review* (London: 1989), pp. 93-94; Nancy Patterson Ševčenko, "Icons in the Liturgy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991): pp. 45-57, especially pp. 47-48; Cormack in David Buckton, ed., *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections.* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), no. 140; Robin

Theophano[75] was elevated as a saint almost immediately upon her death, although the specific circumstances of this elevation are not known.[76] The process of the recognition of sanctity, which is referred to as canonization in the West, is not well understood for the middle Byzantine period. The available evidence suggests that in this period the recognition process of saints was not highly regulated by the church, and was a sort of grassroots movement that grew out of local veneration that gained momentum for various reasons.[77]

Two marginal notes, scholia, found in a thirteenth century manuscript at the Vatican Library reveal some information about the origins of the cult of Theophano: "the same thing has also happened in our time and everybody is seized by a hysteria

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Cormack, "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 24-51; Valika Foundoulakis, "The Icon of Orthodoxy in the British Museum: An Example of Late 14th Century Constantinopolitan Art" (Ph. D. dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1998).

[74] Emmanuel Tzanfournaris: Feast of Orthodoxy icon, Church of St. George of the Greeks, Venice; Emmanuel Tzanfournaris: Anastelosis of the icons, Benaki Museum, Athens; Theophanes the Cretan: Feast of Orthodoxy, wall painting of the catholicon of Laura Monastery, Athos, 1525; Theophanes the Cretan: Feast of Orthodoxy, wall painting of the catholicon of Stavroniketa, Athos, 1525; Triumph of Orthodoxy, wall painting of the catholicon of monastery of St. Neophytos, Paphos, c. 1500; Triumph of Orthodoxy, wall painting at the Church of St. Sozomenos, Galata, 1513, see Cormack, "Women and Icons, and Women in Icons," pp. 46-47, no. 18 with bibliography.

[75] See Alexander P. Kazhdan, *The List of Saints of the 1st-10th Centuries in a Chronological Order* (Unpublished Typescript, Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), no. 281.

[76] Although the process of canonization has not been studied systematically, it seems that at the end of the thirteenth century a fundamental change occurred in the recognition of sanctity in the Orthodox Church, perhaps under the influence of extensive contacts with the Latin Church; for a discussion of canonization in the late Byzantine period see Ruth Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period," in *The Byzantine Saint. University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Studies Supplementary to Sobornost 5*, ed. Sergei Hackel (London: 1981), pp. 67-87, especially pp. 83-87. Also see Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, vol. I, *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D. C.: Dumarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), p. vii; Alice-Mary Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium*, ed. N. M. Vaporis, vol. 8, *The Archbishop Iakokvos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources* (Brookline, MA: 1983), pp. 21-30.

[77] Macrides characterizes canonization in Byzantium as follows: "For it is generally accepted that recognition of sanctity in the earlier period [i.e. before the late Byzantine period] consisted of the consent and acclamation of a local community. A cult would develop around the physical remains of a person which would have some or all of the following elements: veneration of the relic and miracles, translation of the relic, writing of an *akolouthia* and vita, painting of an icon of the saint, celebration of the saint's memory on the anniversary of his or her death. The name of the saint would be recorded in the calendar of the local church or monastery with which he was associated." Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period," p. 84. For recent discussion of the process of the recognition of sanctity in the middle Byzantine period see Caren F. Calendine, "Theosis and the Recognition of Saints in Tenth Century Byzantium" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1998), pp. 5, 126-139, Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 91-95.

characteristic of women so as to proclaim the emperor's [late wife] Theophano a saint." And: "As the *magister* Slokakas stirred to frenzy the emperor Leo about Theophano with relating numbers of supernatural dreams and cures, so that he could simply thrive by telling lies."[78] Alexakis concluded that they were composed during the reign of Leo VI and connected them with the anonymous author of the *Life of Theophano* suggesting that Slokakas was in fact its author.[79] Although Alexakis's conclusion about the authorship of the *Life of Theophano* may be questioned, the importance of the marginal notes is clear, and their date in the tenth century is convincing. The statement, that "everybody is seized by a hysteria" is no doubt an exaggeration, however, it still reveals that there was a popular movement of some kind (either in court circles or among the populace of the city of Constantinople) that championed the elevation of Theophano to sainthood, and that a certain Slokakas seized upon the figure of Theophano for his own personal advancement. The cause and effect relationship between these two events is not clear, but Alexakis's conclusion is probably correct that Theophano's recognition as a saint did not originate as an imperial policy. [80]

To this evidence one may add further information from the *Life of Theophano* composed soon after the death of the empress.[81] Scholars agree that the author must have

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[78] Vat. Gr. 1322. The notes are found in the text of Lucian that describes the rising veneration of the friend of Alexander the Great, Hephaestion. The notes compare the outrageous and politically motivated promotion of Hephaestion to a god and Theophano to a saint, see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," pp. 54-56. For the scholia, see: H. Rabe, "Die Überlieferung der Lukianscholien," *Nachrichten von der König. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1902): 718-36, especially pp. 725-726; H. Rabe, *Scholia in Lucianum* (Leipzig: 1906), pp. 26/29-27/6.

[79] The expression "in our time" suggested to Alexakis that the author of the note was a contemporary of Leo VI, see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," p. 47 no. 9. Alexakis also argued that the suppression of events related to Leo's affair with Zoe Zaoutzaina in Theophano's vita may provide a date for the completion of the vita before the death of the protagonists concerned in the events (Zaoutes died in 899, Zoe in 900, and Leo in 912), see ibid., p. 55. Costa-Louillet proposed that the Vita of Theophano was written by an author who had known the empress and her family, and that it must have been written before the death of Leo VI in 912, see G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saint de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles," 24, 25-27 (1954): pp. 179-263, 453-511, 784-852, especially pp. 823-836.

[80] Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," p. 56.

[81] BHG 1794. The anonymous vita survives in two fourteenth century manuscripts in Florence and Gothenbrug both of which contain lives of female saints exclusively: Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. gr. Magliabechianus 50 (Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214); Gothenburg, cod. Gr. 4, (olim Kephallenia, Argostolion, cod. 3). On the Florence manuscript see: A. Oliveri, "Indices codicum graecorum Magliabechianorum supplementum," *Studi ital. Di filol. Class* 5 (1897): pp. 413-15; H. Delehaye, "Vita sanctae Olympiadis et

been her contemporary who belonged to a family with ties to the imperial court. [82] The text of the vita reveals that the author was closely associated with the family of Theophano since beyond writing her vita he composed two canons commemorating the empress upon the request of her uncle, the *artoklines* Martinos. The text also supplies much information about the author's family through the extensive descriptions of healing miracles performed by the relics of Theophano for himself and his relatives. Thus, the text of the vita reveals that its composition was undertaken not only because of the author's personal devotion to the empress, but also in order to further the social position of the family of Theophano and the family of the hagiographer.[83] Both Herlong and Calendine noted that the promotion of a new cult of a saint by personal friends and

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narratio Sergiae de eiusdam translatione," *Analecta Bollandiana* 15 (1896): pp. 406-08; A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* (Leipzig: 1936-1939), III, pp. 912-913. On the Gothenburg manuscript see: Spyridon Lampros, "Treis kodikes en Kephallenia," *Neos Hell.* 6 (1909): pp. 322-27; Fançois Halkin, "Le ménologe grec de Gothenbourg," *Analecta Bollandiana* 60 (1942): pp. 216-20, Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* , III, pp. 909-912, and T. Kleberg, *Catalogus codicum graecorum et latinorum universitatis Gothoburgensis*, 2nd ed. ed., vol. 16, *Acta Bibliothecae Univerisitatis Gothoburgensis* (Gothenburg: 1974). Eduard Kurtz published the text of Theophano's vita from the manuscript in Florence, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI." Cesaretti emphasized that the yet unpublished Gothenburg manuscript contains a fuller and clearer text and promised a critical edition and English translation of the anonymous vita of Theophano in 1988. To my knowledge he has not published this work yet; see Paolo Cesaretti, "Some Remarks on the Vita of the Empress Theophano (BHG 1794)," *Svenska Kommittén För Bysantinska Studier, Bulletin* 6 (1988): pp. 23-27, especially p. 24. Rapp analyzed the two manuscripts with regard to intended audience and usage, see Claudia Rapp, "Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): pp. 313-44, especially pp. 319-320.

[82] Scholars concur that the uniformly flattering presentation of the imperial house and the silence about events that would tarnish the fame of Leo VI suggest that the vita was written before the death of Leo VI in 912. Magdalino proposed a date of 895 or 896 for the composition of the *Life of Theophano* because it portrays Stylianos Zaoutzes and his family in a positive light, which would have been only possible before their downfall in 899-900, see Paul Magdalino, "Saint Demetrios and Leo VI," *Byzantionslavica* LI, no. 2 (1990): pp. 198-201, especially pp. 198-199. Kurtz, the first publisher of the vita, suggested that the author was a monk, a notion also accepted by Vinson, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," p. II and Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," p. 59. Others, among them Costa-Louillet, Alexakis, and Cesaretti believe that the author was a lay member of the Byzantine aristocracy, see G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saints de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles," *Byzantion* 24; 25--27 (1955-56, 1957): pp. 179-263, 453-511; 783-852, especially p. 824; Cesaretti, "Some Remarks on the Vita of the Empress Theophano (BHG 1794)," especially pp. 26-27; Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," especially p. 48. Costa-Louillet summarized Loparev's position, who suggested that the author was a court official who later retired to a monastery and revised the vita, see Costa-Louillet, "Saint de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles," p. 824.

[83] For the motivation of the author, see Rapp, "Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience," p. 325 and Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," pp. 59-60.

relations was in fact the established procedure in the middle Byzantine period.[84] Placed in this context, the development of the cult of Theophano appears less as a uniquely opportunistic enterprise of a social climber. However, one must admit, that it is clear that the vita's uniformly positive presentation of the imperial house and the silence about events that would tarnish the fame of Leo VI (namely the marital difficulties between Leo and Theophano, and Leo's liaison with Zoe Zautzaina during his first marriage) reveal that the author also sought the emperor's favor for himself and for the benefit of his family through the writing of the vita.[85]

Several authors inform us about the miracles performed by the relics of Theophano between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. Thus, the *Life of Theophano* describes that forty days after the burial miracles started to happen at her tomb: "After the fortieth day of her burial her miracles shined forth in the whole world. . . . Many and great cures were furnished to those who were near her honorable tomb (soros) and her good deeds were heard all over the world and the news of the miracles became known even in the opposite side of the world."[86] The mid-tenth century history of Leo Grammaticus also reports that a following her funeral Theophano's tomb began to produce miracles "because of her lack of jealousy and bitterness and because she had devoted herself to charity and prayers and constantly lived for God, spending her time in the holy churches."[87] A gloss in one of the manuscripts of the *Patria* dating to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century states: "She [Theophano] was buried at the Holy Apostles, she sends forth fountains of the greatest miracles to this day in the women's convent of the church which is honored by the name of the great and holy Constantine."[88]

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[84] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 25. For the issue of family cults also see Calendine, "Theosis and the Recognition of Saints in Tenth Century Byzantium," pp. 102-109, Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," 95-105.

[85] Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," pp. 54-55; Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," p. 58.

[86] Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," ch. 24, p. 17. For a summary and analysis of the miracles described by the Life of Theophano, see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," pp. 51-53.

[87] Bekker, *Leo Grammaticus* , p. 270, 15-18; translated in Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?," p. 183.

[88] Glanville Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9-10 (1956): pp. 301-05, especially p. 305, Albrecht Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos, Poikila Byzantina 8* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1988), p. 500.

Clearly Theophano's miracle working activity was still active and celebrated in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Another thirteenth-fourteenth century gloss in the *Patria* also mentions Theophano's miracles. It explains that Leo built the church of All Saints "because of the miracle-working quality and holiness of his wife, I mean the first Theophano, the saint and miracle-worker empress."[89] The second vita of Theophano written by Nikephoros Gregoras in the fourteenth century lacks an account of Theophano's miracles, although Gregoras mentions that he is aware of them.[90]

The marginal notes and the early vita of Theophano demonstrate that the cult of Theophano originated with a popular Constantinopolitan movement, which should probably be connected with the real or alleged healings performed by her relics. Her cause, however, was soon taken over by the emperor Leo himself. The mid-tenth century historian Symeon Magister reports that Leo VI had dedicated a church to his first wife, Saint Theophano in Constantinople.[91] The Church of St. Theophano stood adjoining the Church of the Holy Apostles, on its east side, and was demolished in 1390,[92] its dedication, however, was changed soon after its consecration to All Saints.[93] In addition

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[89] Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , p. 363. Theophano's miracles, however, do not appear in the short life of Theophano recorded in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* and in the even shorter commemoration included in the *Menologion of Basil II*, neither are they present in the *Life of Euthymios*, which also fails to mention her sanctification.

[90] BHG 1795. Gregoras's vita survives in two copies: Codex Vindobonensis theolog. graec. 279, f. 108-128v and Codex Monacensis graec. 10, f. 33-60. For a publication of the text see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," pp. 25-45. For a recent discussion of Gregoras's text, see Alice-Mary Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period" (The Twilight of Byzantium. Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire, Princeton University, 1989), pp. 15-26.

[91] See Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Leone Basilii f. ch. 5, pp. 702-703; Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," p. 301, no. 4; R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin. Première partie*, vol. III (Paris: 1953), pp. 253-254.

[92] Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," , p. 302, no. 17. Also see Jean Ebersolt, *Sanctuaires de Byzance. Recherses sur les anciens trésors des églises de Constantinople* (Paris: 1921), pp. 36-37; Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , p. 500.

[93] Although this change of name was not recorded in contemporary sources, it is mentioned by Nikephoros Gregoras, the fourteenth century author of Theophano's second vita, see Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," p. 304. That the Church of All Saints and the Church of Theophano were the same building has been established by the careful study of the references to the Church of All Saints ibid by Downey, George Majeska, "The Body of St. Theophano the Empress and the Convent of St. Constantine," *Byzantinoslavica* 38 (1977): pp. 14-21, especially pp. 14-15; Gilbert Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints,"

to the church, there is also evidence of a chapel of St. Theophano dedicated by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the son of Leo VI by this fourth wife, reported in the latest layer of the *Patria*. It states: "Saint Theophano, outside the old conch of the memorials, Constantine the son of Leo, the Porphyrogennetus, built."[94] Although it has been suggested that this reference indicates that the chapel of Theophano was located inside the Church of the Holy Apostles, it is more likely that it refers to a lateral chapel that was added to the Church of All Saints (previously St. Theophano) during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogennetus, as demonstrated by Dagron.[95] The *Book of Ceremonies* makes it clear that this lateral chapel dedicated to a Saint Theophano faced another chapel located on the other side of the sanctuary dedicated to a martyr named Leo. Dagron established convincingly that Theophano's tomb, and the chapels of Leo and Theophano became part of the ceremonial landscape during the feasts of Constantine and Helena and of All Saints, and served as commemorations of imperial predecessors and patron saints for the ruling dynasty.[96]

The evidence regarding the location of Theophano's bodily remains are sketchy and contradictory. Downey proposed that her body was first placed in the Church of St.

Symmeikta 11 (1994): pp. 201-17; and Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium* , p. 204.

[94] *"Την αγιαν Θεοφανω εξωτεν της παλαιας κογχης των μνημοθεσιων ανηγειρεν αυτην Κωνσταντινος ο υιος Λεοντος ο Πορφυρογεννητος," Patria* III, ch. 212, Theodor Preger, ed., *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (New York: 1975), p. 282/1-7. For English translation and a discussion of the passage, see Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," p. 303; for German translation and interpretation, see Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , pp. 499-501.

[95] According to Downey, the *konkhe* may refer to the *synthronon* of the Holy Apostles, which stood in the center of the sanctuary rather than attached to its east wall, thus "the memorial of Saint Theophano was inside the Holy Apostles, and . . . was associated with the altar and the bema." This interpretation, however, has been refuted by Dagron who believes that the *konkhe* does not refer to the *synthronon* of the Holy Apostles, but rather to the mausoleum of Constantine covered by a dome. Dagron suggested that the mention of Constatine Porphyrogennetus as the builder of the St. Theophano in this passage is either a simple mistake, or reflects a building project undertaken by Constantine Porphyrogennetus which included the addition of two lateral chapels to the church of Saint Theophano/All Saints; see Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints," . Also see Strube's comments about Downey's interpretation, Christine Strube, *Die westliche Eingangsseite der Kirchen von Konstantinopel in justinianischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden: 1973), pp. 143-145. Skyliztes mentions that the Church of All Saints was damaged in an earthquake in January of AM 6518 (AD 1010), and the emperor rebuilt the church immediately, see John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories (For the Years 811-1057)*, trans. John Wortley (University of Manitoba, Centre for Hellenic Civilization, 2000), Basil II Bulgaroctonos ch. 34, p. 186. The restoration undertaken by Basil II creates a further possible connection between Basil II and Theophano. For the earthquake also see Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* , p. 500.

[96] Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints."

Theophano, then following the alteration of the dedication of the church to All Saints it was moved to the Mausoleum of Constantine at the Holy Apostles, and was finally placed in the Monastery of Constantine some time between 1025 and 1350.[97] Dagron, suggested a simpler, more likely scenario; he believes that the body of Theophano was placed in the Church of the Holy Apostles immediately after her death due to the emphatic objections of the clergy against the dedication of a church to a recently deceased empress.[98]

Theophano's sanctification[99] fits into a larger pattern of imperial patronage of dynastic saints and attempts at imperial canonization by members of the Macedonian dynasty.[100] Leo's father, Basil I attempted to elevate his first son, Leo's older brother, Constantine to sainthood after his premature death, but without lasting results. The patriarch Photios entertained Basil's devotion to his son by conjuring up a vision of the deceased and at the location of this apparition the Monastery of Constantine was established.[101] Seen in this context, it appears that Theophano's sanctification is part of a

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[97] Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of Theophano) Near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," p. 305. The *Book of Ceremonies* and the *Vita of Theophano* mention the Holy Apostles as her resting place. Majeska analyzed a fifteenth century copy of the *Patria* which records that Theophano's body was translated from the Holy Apostles to the Monastery of Constantine and emphasized that the textual evidence suggests that she was likely moved there after 1204, see Majeska, "The Body of St. Theophano the Empress and the Convent of St. Constantine," p. 16 and George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1984), pp. 296-298.

[98] Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints," especially p. 205.

[99] Theophano is extensively commemorated in surviving menologia and synaxaria, see for example *Synaxarium Sirmiondi* (BHG 1795e), Codes Berolinens, Phillipps. 1622, f. 107ff, eleventh century, published as Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , pp. 313-316, with further references. Theophano is also recorded in the typikon of the Great Church (tenth century manuscript, Ms. Sainte-Croix, no. 40, f. 66v/25) on December 16, see Mateos, "Le Typicon de la Grande Église," pp. 132-133, with further references to her commemoration.

[100] Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre: étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris: 1996), pp. 208-209.

[101] See Nicetas Paphlagon: *Life of the Patriarch Igantios*, PG 105, col. 573, and Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Basilio Macedone, ch. 17, pp. 692-693. See Dagron, "Théophanô, les Saint-Apôtres et l'Église de Tous-les-Saints," pp. 210-211, who also suggested that the revival of the cult of Constantine the Great may have been an outgrowth of the failed canonization of Basil's son. A piece of visual evidence possibly related to Basil's attempt to elevate his first son as a saint was published by Gerstel. It is a polychrome ceramic icon of a St. Constantine probably produced in Constantinople in ninth through the eleventh centuries, 16x16 cm at the Walters Art Gallery that represents a bust of a bearded, mature saint in the imperial loros holding the labarum. As this image differs from typical middle Byzantine representations of Constantine the Great, Gerstel suggested that it may be a representation of Constantine, the son of Basil, see Sharon Gerstel, ed. and ed. Julie A. Lauffenbruger, *A Lost Art Rediscovered : The*

broader policy of imperial promotion of patron saints for the benefit of the Macedonian dynasty. Thus, when Leo decided to appropriate the popular cult of his first wife, he followed a practice established by his father. Theophano died without providing Leo with a male heir. She only gave birth to a daughter who died as a child before the death of Theophano. Leo VI wanted a son who would continue the dynasty of the Macedonian family established by his father. He would go to great length to achieve this goal since he would marry four times defying the law prohibiting fourth marriages, which he himself promulgated.[102] It is perhaps possible to see his promotion of the cult of Theophano in this context. By supporting Theophano's elevation to sainthood, he may have expected to achieve a personal patron saint, who would further his cause. Perhaps the history of the conception of Theophano, i.e. that she was born to her parents late in their lives due to the intercession of the Theotokos,[103] would have prompted such expectations by the emperor.[104]

Two humble objects, a glass paste cameo and a lead token containing images of Theophano, attest to the spread of her cult at the popular level. The rectangular green glass paste cameo found in Constantinople and now at Dumbarton Oaks depicts a bust of the holy empress Theophano clad in the *loros* and wearing a high, elaborate crown with

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Architectural Ceramics of Byzantium (Baltimore, Univeristy Park, PA: Walters Art Museum, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

[102] ODB III, Remarriage, p. 1783

[103] Recorded in her vita, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," , ch. 2-3, p. 2, as well as in the synaxarion of Constantinople, Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , p. 314, and the Menologion of Basil, PG 117, p. 210.

[104] Gerstel proposed that Leo VI attempted to elevate his second and third wife as well, see Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "Saint Eudokia and the Imperial Household of Leo VI," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 4 (1997): pp. 699-707. This argument is based on the identification of a saint Eudokia depicted on a marble inlayed icon from the monastery of Lips in Constantinople and on a single reference to a Church of St. Zoe. For the marble icon, see Gerstel in Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , pp. 42-43, for the reference to the Church of St. Zoe, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Leone Basilii f., ch. 5, p. 703. I believe it is unlikely that Leo attempted to elevate his second and third wives, given the fact that he encountered the opposition of the church even during his attempt to dedicate a church to his first wife, which forced him to rededicate her church to All Saints. For a different identification of the Eudokia depicted on the Lips icon, see Areti Papanastasiou, "Saint Eudokia the Empress" (Abstracts of Papers - Twenty-Seventh Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, University of Notre Dame, 2001), p. 24.

pendilia (Fig. 158).[105] An inscription flanking the bust of the empress identifies her as: *ΗΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΦΑΝΟ.* The empress is represented in the abbreviated form of the orant position with her palms facing out lifted up in front of her chest. The figure style is highly abstract and schematic, quite unlike most other surviving cameos made of glass or precious stone, but resembles the figure style often seen on imperial seals.[106] Ross dated the cameo to the elevnth century without offering supportive evidence, and argued that it must have been manufactured in Constantinople as its find spot was reported to be Constantinople, and since the cult of Theophano was a Constantinopolitan phenomenon.[107] The cameo is known only in one example. Wentzel argued that it belongs to a group of eight, closely related glass paste cameos which are all made from transparent glass, none of them are oval in shape (they are either circular or rectangular), are known from one surviving example only, and most of them closely depend on the style and iconography of precious stone cameos.[108] He further suggested that this subgroup of glass cameos was likely produced in Constantinople, in contrast to the vast majority of glass cameos, which he attributed to Venice.[109]

This humble cameo appears to be a piece of material evidence attesting to the popular Constantinopolitan cult of Saint Theophano. It most likely served as a devotional souvenir sold to someone who visited the relics of Theophano, similarly to other glass cameos. Unfortunately because of the general difficulties of the dating of glass cameos, and because of the unique subject matter and distinctive style of this particular cameo it is not possible to offer a secure date for its manufacture, however, it seems likely that it

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[105] 2.9 x 2.1 cm; Dumbarton Oaks no. 56.21. The find spot was reported to have been Constantinople. Marvin C. Ross, *Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Reserach Library and Collection, 1962), no. 104, p. 87, fig. LVII/104.

[106] Marvin C. Ross, "Three Byzantine Cameos," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 3 (1960): pp. 43-45.

[107] Ross, *Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting* , p. 87.

[108] Hans. Wentzel, "Das Medaillon mit dem Hl. Theodor und die venezianischen Glaspasten im byzantinischen Stil," in *Festschrift für Erich Meyer zum sechzigsten Geburtstag* (Hamburg: 1957), pp. 50-67, especially pp. 55-57.

[109] Ibid. , p. 56 and Hans Wentzel, "Zu dem Enkolpion mit dem Hl. Demetrios in Hamburg," *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen* 8 (1963): 11-24, especially p. 22. Other scholars, however, emphasized that there is not enough evidence to ascribe glass paste cameos en mass to Venice. For example, Ross suggested that since glass objects had also been produced in Byzantium, and the Crusader presence in Constantinople could explain the Western influences and Latin inscriptions on glass paste cameos in general, that it is not at all clear what was their place of manufacture, see Ross, "Three Byzantine Cameos," ; also see Ross, *Metalwork, Ceramics, Glass, Glyptics, Painting* , p. 88. Wenztel did not suggest a date for the production of these cameos.

would date to the tenth century, when the promotion of the cult of Theophano was at its high point.

A round, humble lead token shows on its reverse a representation of the empress Theophano standing in orant position, dressed in a tunic and a *loros* with a jeweled collar (Fig. 159). She wears a tall crown with pendilia; her name is inscribed: *Η ΘΕΟΦ*. The obverse of the token displays a wandering womb – a triangular face with snake-like projections, recalling a stylized representation of a Medusa head - and the inscription *(Φ)ωC Η ZωΗ*.[110] This medallion belongs to a larger group of hystera amulets that typically display the wondering womb on the obverse, while the reverse may show Christ, the Virgin, imperial saints (Theophano, or Constantine and Helena), or the demon Gylou slain by a holy rider. The life of Theophano attests to a series of healing miracles that took place at her tomb, yet these do not include cures that have to do with childbirth. However, her vita informs us that Theophano was born to her parents late in their life due to the intercession of the Mother of God, and the promise of her birth was announced through a waking vision to her parents. It is possible that this narrative forged the link between the figure of Theophano, who was already understood as a healing saint, and childbirth.

Zoe and Theodora in Sinai Gr. 364

Sinait gr. 364 contains two full page miniatures on f.2v-3r at the beginning of the collection of 45 homilies by St. John Chrysostom executed on parchment.[111] On f.2v Matthew offers his Gospel to Chrysostom as the homilies interpret text of the Gospel of

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[110] The amulet is 4.5 cm in diameter; Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, 1951.31.4.1896; see Molly Fulghum Heintz, "Magic, Medicine, and Prayer," in *Byzantine Women and their World*, ed. Ioli Kalavrezou (Cambride, New Haven, London: Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 275-81,especially pp. 291-292. A similar amulet of much rougher quality was published by Hirsch Auktion, 1999, cat. 1170, and has been classified as a forgery in the Vienna seal archive by Werner Seibt.

[111] 33x25 cm, 369 folios. V. Benesevic, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum graecorum qui in monasterio Sanctae Catherinae in monte Sina asservantur* (Saint Petersburg: 1911), I, 205-206; V. Benesevic, *Monumenta sinaitica archaeologica et palaeographica* (Leningrad: 1925), I, pl. 30; Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , p. 20.

Mathew (Fig.3).[112] The emperor Constantine IX Monomachos flanked by his wife Zoe and his sister-in-law Theodora appears below the figure of the enthroned Christ on the opposite page, f.3r (Fig. 160). Constantine is dressed in the *skaramangion* and wears the golden *loros* above it. He holds a scepter in his right and a scroll (or *akakia)* in his left. The empresses are dressed in red and blue tunics and wear identical *loroi* with the *thorakia*. They both hold scepters in their left hands and lift their right hands in front of their chests. Zoe's crown is taller than that of Theodora, and has an arched central jewel rather than a square one. Angels appear on the two sides of Christ holding crowns and scepters and a third crown hovers immediately below Christ's mandorla. Rays of light emanate from the hands of Christ to the heads of the empresses while another ray reaches the head of the emperor through the crown.[113]

The emperor is framed by the following text: "Constantine in Christ God faithful king, emperor of the Romans Monomachus," while the inscriptions of the two sisters appear between their figures and the frame and describe them with the same words as empresses born in the purple (*Augusta porphyrogenneta*), although Zoe also receives the epithet most pious.[114] This difference in title and Zoe's more prominent placement to the right of the emperor reflects her higher position in the state hierarchy. The imperial image is enclosed within an ornamental frame, outside of which an inscription encircles the page: "As the one Pantokrator of the Trinity, oh Savior, may you protect the shining trinity of earthly sovereigns, the mightiest ruler Monomachus and the couple of common blood, the offshoot of the purple."[115] The inscription uses the topos of image likeness between the earthly ruler and the divinity. In this case, however, the special political circumstances are emphasized by the simile between the three imperial personages (representatives of the same sole power) and the trinity. Although Monomachos appears

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[112] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 99. The following inscription encircles the image: "The one gilded in language and style, who has placed in clear view the words of the publican, requests with him serenity of life, and participation with those above for the rulers of those below." Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 100.

[113] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 100.

[114] *ΚωΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟC ΕΝ Χω ΤωΘω ΠΙCΤΟC ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡ ΡωΜΑΙΝ Ο ΜΟΝΟΜΑΧΟC, ΖωΕ ΕΥCΕΒΑCΤΑΤΗ ΑΥΓΟΥC(ΤΗ) ΠΟΡΦΥΡΟΓΕΝΗΤΕ*, ibid. , p. 100, fig. 66.

[115] *ωC ΤΗC ΤΡΙΑΔΟC CωΤΕΡ ΕΙC ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤωΡ ΤωΝ ΓΗC ΑΝΑΚΤωΝ ΦΑΕΙΝΗΝ ΤΡΙ(ΑΔΑ) CΚΕΠΟΙC ΚΡΑΤΙCΤΟΝ ΔΕCΠΟΤΗΝ ΜΟΝΟΜΑΧΟΝ ΟΜΑΙΜΟΝωΝ ΖΕΥΓΟC ΤΕ ΠΟΡΦΥΡΑC ΚΛΑΔ(ΟΝ)* ibid. , p. 100.

in the middle of the image, the strict frontality of the figures and the rays of son emanating from Christ, as well as the three identical crowns bestowed by the angels and Christ emphasize that the empresses derive their power without the emperor as an intermediary. Spatharakis suggested that the image may be dated with precision to June to August of 1042.[116] This proposal, however, is based on a misreading of Psellos' text that immediately follows the description of the wedding of Constantine and Zoe: "For the empresses these events [i.e. the wedding] marked the end of their authority and personal intervention in the affairs of the State; for Constantine, the beginning of his reign. His power was now for the first time established. So, after a joint rule of three months, the sisters retired from public life and the emperor. . . "[117] In my view, the joint rule of three months refers to the joint rule of Zoe and Theodora from April through June 1042, preceding Zoe's marriage to Constantine, rather than the joint rule of Constantine, Zoe, and Theodora after the wedding. Moreover, other textual references indicate that even after Constantine's coronation the three imperial figures appeared together in imperial ceremonials, as for instance during the triumph over George Maniakes in 1043. Psellos reported about this celebration: "The emperor, meanwhile, very distinguished and proud, was seated in front of the so-called Chalke Phylake, in the actual precinct of the sacred church built by John, the great emperor who succeeded Nikephoros Phocas. Seated with him, on his left and right, were the empresses, also watching the triumph."[118] A letter of Mauropous addressed to Monomachos also describes the imperial figures as an indivisible triad: "In this spirit we pray and beseech your serenity and our most holy mistresses and Empresses to perform such magnificent tasks and may the Holy Trinity, the indivisible and eternal, sustain you three united for many years to come, for the relief and consolation of the Christian people and for the permanence and union of the churches of God."[119] Clearly, the representation in the Sinai manuscript could have come from any

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[116] Ibid. , p. 102.
[117] Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), Book Six, ch. 20-22, p. 165.
[118] Ibid. , Book Six, ch. 88-89, p. 198-199; also see McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West* , p. 204.
[119] A. Karpozilos, *The Letters of Ioannes Mauropous, Metropolitan of Euchaita* (Thessalonika: Association for Byzantine Research, 1990), Epistole 26, the latter is dated to the winter of 1047, see ibid., p. 222. Also see his Epigram 54, PG 120, pp. 1169-70.

period of Monomachos's reign. The emphatic presentation of Zoe and Theodora as important members of the imperial triad did not reflect the actual circumstances of the exercise of power, as the empresses did not participate in the administration after his accession, yet it acknowledged Constantine's indebtedness to the imperial sisters (after all, he became emperor because Zoe selected him as her third husband) and presented an ideal view of the imperial authority emphasizing the continuation of the Macedonian dynasty.

Eudokia Makrembolitissa and her Family in Paris Gr. 922

The Paris gr. 922 is a Sacra Parallela manuscript that originally belonged to the empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa.[120] The first three folios show the list of contents and f.4r contains an inscription in the form of a magic square identifying the owner of the manuscript: "This book belongs to the Augusta Eudokia."[121] The same text appears as an acrostic in the dedication on f.5v, the text facing the image of the imperial family.

1) Christ, having come across conjugal love,
has bestowed on you the glory of wielding the scepter,
this heavenly initiative and fundament,
incomparable and strange to understand;
5) or can strange things be understood by the mind that
has noticed and observed (them) in books full of spirit?
Now then, carrying out sensibly so many things,
you have really found an immaterial inheritance
by denying every earthly desire.
10) For this reason you are now adorned with the crown of power
in all the hymns and holy books,
together with the children, resplendent in the crown,
the light-bearing branches of the purple.
You have heard, oh mistress (despoina) and ruler of the world (kosmokrator),
15) all these exist for you and through you.
There is also a choir of saints
giving you the divinely inspired books.
Dissolve, oh queen, the darkness of grief[122],

[120] Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , p. 24, with earlier bibliography.
[121] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 103.
[122] May be translated as pain or grief.

guide me, your suppliant scribe, show me
20) the path to the light in such ways as you know.[123]

The dedicatory inscription faces a badly flaked representation on f.6r showing the imperial couple, Constantine X (1059-1067) and Eudokia crowned by the Virgin and flanked by two of their sons crowned by angels (Fig. 161). The co-emperors are identified as Michael and Constantine since Andronikos did not figure in imperial iconography until after Eudokia's regency.[124] The imperial figures and the Virgin stand on separate *suppedia*. The emperor and empress are clad in *loroi*, while the boys are shown in *chlamydes*. Constantine's face is reasonably well preserved; he is shown with dark hair and a short dark beard and long nose. The two sons, Michael and Constantine are rendered with different heights, Michael reaches up to the shoulder of his father, while Constantine only reaches up to the bosom of Eudokia. Due to its poor preservation, it is difficult to establish more about the details of the image. 16 medallions fill the frame around the page; the central three at the top show Christ between Peter and Paul while the other roundels contain portraits of the authors whose writings are contained in the manuscript, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Moses, Jesus Sirach, Maximus, Gregory of Nazianzenus, John Chrysostom, David, Solomon, Nilus and three unidentified saints. The authors display their scrolls offering them to the imperial family in the center of the page.

Hennessy argued that the imperial figures have been erroneously identified as Constantine X, Eudokia, and their oldest sons, and suggested that the representation in fact shows Eudokia with her three sons after the death of her husband, Constantine X. She proposed that the text in lines 8-9: "... you have really found an immaterial inheritance by denying every earthly desire" refers to the oath Eudokia took at the death bed of her husband in which she promised not to remarry, and suggested that line 18 "Dissolve, oh queen, the darkness of grief" hints at the death of Constantine.[125] However, the verb (you have found) in line 8 is in the 2nd person plural, indicating that it

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[123] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 104. Also see Appendix B, no. 4.
[124] Ibid. , p. 106.
[125] Hennessy, "Imagery of Childern in Byzantium" , pp. 155-156. For Eudokia's oath, see N. Oikonomides, "Le serment de l'impératrice Eudocie (1067). Un épisode de l'histoire dynastique de Byzance," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 21 (1963): pp. 101-28.

is addressed to both the emperor and empresses represented in the image, making it unlikely that the text would reference Eudokia's oath. Moreover, in lines 10-12: "For this reason you are now adorned[126] with the crown of power, in all the hymns and holy books, together with the children, resplendent in the crown..." the verb adorned is in the 2nd person plural, in which the children do not seem to be included; thus it seems that the reference is made to the imperial couple first, after which their children are also mentioned. Furthermore, lines 18-20: "Dissolve, oh queen, the darkness of grief, guide me, your suppliant scribe, show me the path to the light in such ways as you know" refers to the grief or pain of the scribe, who is offering the manuscript to the empress. Clearly the darkness of his grief/pain is juxtaposed with the presumably spiritual light that he will receive as a return for his offering.[127]

Art historians have also commented on the fact that the empress appears to be of somewhat taller stature in this representation than her husband.[128] This, however, does not prove to be the case upon closer inspection of the miniature. Indeed, it appears that the emperor's crown is at a slightly lower level than the crown of the empress, however, he is not shorter, as he is standing more forward on his *suppedion* since the corners of his shoes appear to touch the edge of the footstool, while Eudokia is placed further back on her own footstool.[129] This convention is also found on the dedicatory page of Paris Gr. 510 (Fig. 147), where the empress Eudokia Ingerina is set further back than her sons, and on the imperial portrait in Sinai gr. 364 (Fig. 160). The latter example is closer in appearance to the Paris miniature, as the emperor Monomachos appears to be slightly shorter than his female colleagues since his crown terminates at a lower level than those

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[126] horaizdesthe – 2nd plural pr. middle passive

[127] It is not clear whether this requests is actually addressed to the empress, or the Virgin, who is the central figure of this image. In a poem addressed to the weeping mother of god, John Mauropous uses a similar phrase when he talks about the grief and pain of the Virgin as a way to "resolve the cosmic grief" as Belting noted, see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 263; PG 120, 1130-1, no. 7.

[128] See for instance Spatharakis, "The Portraits and the Date of the Codex Par. Gr. 510," p. 105, who speculates that she was shown taller either because in real life she was taller or because the manuscript was produced for her.

[129] Eudokia's great importance in her husband's visual propaganda is also made manifest on bronze coins issued during the reign of Constatine X, where the empress is placed on the right, privileged side of the coin surface, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/2, pl. LXIV, 8.1, 8.10, 8.19.

of Zoe and Theodora, yet, he clearly is of equal stature only placed further down on the picture plane.

A further visual feature – the imperial dress - also indicates that the family portrait more likely represents Eudokia and her first husband with their two sons than Eudokia and her three sons. The two imperial figures crowned by the Virgin are shown in the *loros* dress, while the boys are presented in a different garment, the *chlamys*. Such differentiation seems more appropriate between the imperial parents and their children, than mother and eldest son vs. younger sons. Moreover, on coin and seal images produced during Eudokia's regency and during her second marriage, Eudokia and her sons are all dressed in *loroi* when they are shown together.

Therefore, in my view the original interpretation of this miniature as a family portrait of Constantine X with his wife Eudokia Makrembolitissa and their eldest sons is more likely. It fits into the tradition of dynastic portraits produced for the private use of the imperial family inaugurated by the Paris gr. 510. It is notable that even in a manuscript that is exclusively addressed to the empress it is not considered appropriate to represent her alone, but rather as a member of her family linking two generations of the imperial dynasty.

Images of Maria of Alania

Coislin 79 in Paris is a collection of 33 homilies of St. John of Chrysostom. The beginning of the manuscript is decorated with four lavish full-page miniatures.[130] F1(2bis)r depicts the Monk Sabas offering his manuscript to the emperor Nikephoros Botaniates (originally Michael VII), f.1(2bis)v shows Nikephoros and his wife Maria crowned by Christ, f.2r. displays a portrait of the emperor surrounded by court officials and personifications, and f.2v depicts the emperor flanked by St. John Chrysostom and

[130] Tempera and gold on vellum, 42.5x31cm. Omont, *Fac-similés des miniatures des plus anicens manuscits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIe siècle* , pp. 32-34; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 107-108; Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , pp. 30-31; Jannic Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris: Bibliothèqe Nationale, Musée du Louvre, 1992), no. 271, pp. 360-361; Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , no. 143, pp. 207-209.

the Archangel Gabriel (Figs. 162-165).[131] The current order of the images is not the original, and the miniatures of the manuscript do not appear in their original format. Spatharakis and Dumitrescu agree that the images found in the codex today used to belong to the original decoration, however, were reused in a truncated form at a later date. The miniatures were cut out of their original pages and pasted onto folios containing painted frames. The middles of these pages were simply cut out and the truncated imperial portraits were pasted on their backs. This way from the recto side the two components (frame and image) appear as an integrated unit.[132] In addition, the face of the emperor was repainted by the lengthening of his beard and by adding strands of gray color to his hair and beard, yet the appearance of the empress was not altered. The image of Sabas offering his manuscript to the emperor was probably a new addition suggested by its lower quality in design and materials.[133]

Scholars agree that the original images were executed to honor Michael VII Doukas and the empress Maria of Alania.[134] The donor of the illuminations has been identified as the eunuch standing next to the throne of the emperor on f2r, whom Dumitrescu identified as John, metropolitan of Side, deposed in 1072. This, however, remains a hypothesis. Dumitrescu believes that the Monk Sabas (whom she would like to see as a relative of the above John of Side) commissioned a new image of himself and the retouching and reorganization of the already existing three images, and presented his gift to the emperor Nikephoros Botaniates and his wife Maria to commemorate their wedding.[135]

The imperial couple is crowned by the half figure of Christ on f1(2bis)v (Fig. 163). Nikephoros and Maria are clad in ceremonial attire and hold scepters in their right hands. Their frontal, motionless and flat figures appear on gold ground. The emperor and Christ are gazing outwards while Maria glances toward her husband, a sign of

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[131] For the dedicatory inscriptions see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 108, 111, 112.
[132] Ibid. , p. 112-114; Laura Dumitrescu, "Remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques et le probleme du donateur," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): pp. 32-45, especially pp. 35-38.
[133] Dumitrescu, "Remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques et le probleme du donateur," p. 36.
[134] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 114; Dumitrescu, "Remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques et le probleme du donateur," p. 39.
[135] Dumitrescu, "Remarques en marge du Coislin 79: les trois eunuques et le probleme du donateur," p. 40, 43-44.

subordination. The figure of Christ is depicted in a different style: he is in motion and the folds of his drapery reveal a good understanding of human anatomy. Maguire argued, on the basis of a panegyric by Psellus, that the abstract, stiff, motionless style of imperial portraits is related to the idea of similarity between the emperor and archangels. This stylistic mode would emphasize those immaterial qualities of the ruler that are beyond the human flesh.[136] Maguire quotes a further panegyric of Psellus on Isaac Comnenos that emphasizes the absence of motion, emotion and rigidity of the features of the emperor and sees them as signs of the ruler's closeness to god.[137] Maguire sees the above readings as contradictory with one another. I believe, however, that they are not necessarily contradictory but contain less and more explicit claims about the emperor's sacred qualities.[138]

Maria of Alania also appears in the Leningrad Psalter [139] in two initials that are formed by imperial figures. Of f.1r an imperial couple and their son form the letter M of the word *makarios* of Psalm 1 (Fig. 166), while on f.311v the same couple but without their son decorate the letter E of the beginning of the Fifth Ode of Isaiah (Fig. 167).[140] On f.1r Michael and Maria flank their young son standing in the middle blessing his head with their left and right hands respectively (Fig. 166). The figure of the emperor has been

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[136] Maguire quotes Psellus' Panegyric on Constantine IX Monomachos as evidence: ". . . For you are to some extent a being with a body and without a body, both above nature and better than nature. We compare you, therefore, to the finest of bodies and to the more immeasurable of those without bodies." Henry Maguire, "Style and Ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art," *Gesta* 28, no. 2 (1990): pp. 217-31, especially p. 223. For the different stylistic modes used in Byzantine art, see Kurt Weitzmann, "The Classical in Byzantine Art as a Mode of Individual Expression," in *Byzantine Art. An European Art.* (Athens: 1966), pp. 149-77; Ernst Kitzinger, "Some Reflections on Portraiture in Byzantine Art," in *The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West, Selected Studies* (Bloomington, London: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 256-69.

[137] "You are an image of the signs of God. You are straight, true, stiff, exact, sweet, gentle, steadfast, firmly fixed, lofty. . . a lantern of purity, a light-bringer of piety, an impartial judge, unwavering in judgment, . . . a secure counselor, noble, unshaken in (stormy) waves. . . . For there are no unseemly qualities in you, neither easily excited emotion, nor false speech, nor severity, nor a deceiving heart, nor a gloominess that sends clouds into people's hearts, nor a fearful glance, nor the harshness of threats, . . . nor excessive toil, nor delight, nor any graces, nor much laughter." Maguire, "Style and Ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art," p. 224.

[138] For further analysis of this image, see Chapters V and VIII.

[139] Leningrad Cod. Gr. 214, f. 1r, f. 311v; parchment, 17.5x12.5cm. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , p. 36, with further bibliography; V. N. Lazarev, *Istorija vizantijskoj zhivopisi* (Moscow: 1986), figs. 221-229.

[140] Victoria Kepetzi, "Images de piété de l'empereur dans la peinture byzantine (Xe/XIIIe siècle) - Reflexions sur quelques exemples choisis," in *Byzantinische Malerei. Bildprogramme - Ikonographie - Stil*, ed. Guntram Koch (Wiesbaden: 2000), pp. 109-45, especially pp. 136-140.

almost completely lost from the edge of the page. The elongated figure of the empress is clad in a blue garment over which is draped the female *loros*, while the boy Constantine appears to be dressed in the *chlamys* and holds a red *akakia* in his left hand. Two inscriptions identify mother and son: *Maria Auto(kra)t(orissa) and Kons(tan)ti(nos) Prophyrogen(n)et(os).*[141] The selection of the imperial family to form the letter M at the opening of the Psalter is hardly surprising, as representations of patrons, or recipients of gifts, are frequently depicted at the beginnings of manuscripts. Given that Michael and Maria's names both begin with the letter M, the choice to impersonate this letter is easily understandable. As the figures form the first letter of the psalm, they also appear as impersonations of the blessed to whom the first verse of the text refers: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."[142] The second initial shows the imperial couple standing side by side with their hands lifted up toward the figure of Isaiah whose large, three quarter figure towers over them, while the half figure of Christ blesses the prophet in turn (Fig. 167). The imperial figures are dressed in the *loros* costume and are represented with more squat proportions than in the first initial. A paraphrase of this ode has been included in the Great Canon of Andrew of Crete, and together with Psalms 19 and 20 it was used in the *orthos* of the liturgy of imperial monasteries and was called *basilica antiphona*, which explains why the imperial figures would inhabit the initial beginning this ode, as shown by Kepetzi.[143]

Imperial Family Portrait in the Barberini Psalter

F.5r of the Barberini Psalter[144] contains an imperial image with a familiar iconography (Fig168). Unfortunately the imperial portrait has been repainted extensively

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[141] Spatharakis suggested that because Constantine is not given the title basileus in the inscription, it is likely that the manuscript was produced before his elevation to the throne as co-emperor in 1074, see Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , p. 38.
[142] Psalm 1/1.
[143] Kepetzi, "Images de piété de l'empereur dans la peinture byzantine (Xe/XIIIe siècle) - Reflexions sur quelques exemples choisis," p. 140.
[144] Barberini gr. 372; parchment, 20,3x17cm. Ernest De Wald, "The Comnenian Portraits in the Barberini Psalter," *Hesperia* 13 (1944): pp. 78-86; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* ,

and the original features of the faces or the stylistic qualities of the painting have been lost. The symmetrical composition depicts the senior emperor and empress flanking the central figure of the junior emperor standing on separate *suppedia*. The emperors wear blue *skaramangia* and golden *loroi* and hold the labarum in their right hands. The senior ruler has the *akakia* in his left while his son holds a book in his left hand, most likely a representation of the Psalter, which the dedicatory image illuminates.[145] The empress wears the female version of the *loros* over a red garment. She holds her right hand above her breast while the left is placed on the *thorakion*. Three angels blessing or placing crowns on the heads appear above their heads. The enthroned Christ holds a crown with pendilia in his right hand and a book resting on his knee with his left, and the angel crowning the senior emperor gestures towards Christ. The figure of the angel creates a direct connection between the two spheres just like the descending angel in the middle who emerges directly from Christ's mandorla. The formal emphasis on the connection between the two spheres makes it clear that the power and authority the emperor received from Christ enables him to make his heir participate in the divine power.

The representation is framed by an inscription that survives only in part: "[ ] whom the triple enlightening Holy Kingdom may safeguard so that they administer the scepters of power peacefully and wisely during many undisturbed years."[146] The dedicatory text does not contain the names of the figures and the first part of the dedication must have preceded the image on the previous folio.[147] Anderson hypothesized that the missing text was perhaps inscribed around another miniature on the previous page.[148] Recent scholarship proposed two suggestions for the identification of

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pp. 26-36; Jeffrey C. Anderson, Paul Canart, and Christopher Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* (Zürich: 1989), pp. 25-26, 55-56; Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , no. 312, pp. 75-76, with bibliography; Jeffrey C. Anderson, "The Date and Purpose of the Barberini Psalter," *Cahiers Archeologiques* 31 (1983): pp. 35-67. The imperial miniature has been heavily restored, yet the restored representation appears to follow the original iconography and regalia of the eleventh century image; one significant change has been introduced by the later artist, who changed the shape of the male crowns. For a discussion of the restoration, see Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , pp. 11-14.

[145] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 27; he suggested that the image likely also commemorates the boy's accession.

[146] *ΟΥC Η ΤΡΙΦΕΙΓΗC ΕΝΘΕΟC ΜΟΝΑΡΧΙΑ ΠΟΛΛΟΙC ΦΥΛΑΞΕΙ ΓΑΛΙΝΙΟΙC ΧΡΟΝΟΙC ΕΙΡΗΝΙΚΗ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ CΟΦΗ ΚΑΤΑCΤΑCΕΙ ΔΙΕΞΑΓΕΙΝ ΤΑ CΚΗΠΤΡΑ ΤΗC ΕΞΟΥCΙΑC*, ibid. , p. 27.

[147] De Wald, "The Comnenian Portraits in the Barberini Psalter," p. 80.

[148] Anderson, "The Date and Purpose of the Barberini Psalter," p. 36.

the figures. Spatharakis argued, mostly on the basis of figure style that the illuminations are stylistically related to the products of the Studios Monastery executed in the 1060s.[149] This date would identify the imperial family on f.5r as Constantine X Doukas, Eudokia Makrembolitissa, and their oldest son, Michael.[150] Anderson's recent study linked the manuscript to the same circle, however, he convincingly suggested a date later in the eleventh century.[151] Based on detailed stylistic analysis he attributed the manuscript to the reign of Alexius (1081-1118), and identified the other figures as his son John and his wife Eirene, a view also argued by Jerphanion and de Wald earlier.[152] The role of the empress in this manuscript is clearly dynastic, she and her husband present their son as the expected heir to the empire.

Empresses as Allegorical Figures

Almsgiving

A series of representations survive in manuscripts that show the personification Almsgiving in the guise of an empress. The earliest example comes from the Chludov Psalter, where on f.35r an empress-like figure appears identified as Almsgiving (Fig. 170).[153] Almsgiving is dressed in a blue garment decorated with clusters of white pearls;

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[149] This style, referred to as "monastic style" is characterized by thin, tall proportions and disregard for three-dimensionality. Spatharakis placed the Barberini Psalter as a stylistic intermediary between the Theodore and the Chludov Psalters, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 30-34.

[150] Ibid. , pp. 30-34.

[151] Anderson, "The Date and Purpose of the Barberini Psalter," p. 39; Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 15. Anderson argued that the painter of the Barberini Psalter copied a manuscript that copied the ninth century Chludov Psalter.

[152] G. de Jerphanion, "Le 'Thorakion' caractéristique du XIe siècle," in *Mélanges Charles Diehl, II* (Paris: 1930), pp. 71-79, especially p. 75; De Wald, "The Comnenian Portraits in the Barberini Psalter." The same identification is endorsed by Anthony Cutler and Jean-Michel Spieser, *Das mittelalterliche Byzanz, 725-1204, Universum der Kunst* (Munich: 1996), p. 350, and Hennessy, "Imagery of Childern in Byzantium," p. 156. Bonicatti, on the other hand suggested John II Komnenos (1118-1143), Irene, and Alexius, see M. Bonicatti, "Per l'origine del Salterio Barberiniano greco 372 e la cronologia del Tetraevangelio Urbanite greco 2," *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 2 (1960): pp. 41-61. Grabar offered the unlikely suggestion, that the representation shows not a particular but a generic imperial family, see Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* , p. 119.

[153] M. Ščepinka and I. Dujcev, *Miniatjury Chludovskoj Psaltyri: Greceskij illjustrirovannyj kodeks 9 veka* (Moscow: 1977), no. 35; E. Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," *Byzantion* LI, no. 2 (1981): pp. 345-85, especially pp. 347-348; for color illustration, see Cutler and Spieser, *Das*

a wide, golden collar with pearls covers her shoulder, while the lower section of her garment is also formed from golden material studded with pearls, fanning out in a manner of the dress of dancers.[154] The figure has a tall, golden crown peppered with pearls from which olive branches sprout. Heavy, shoulder length locks frame her face, she has large, round earrings, and wears red imperial shoes. Although she is not dressed in expressly imperial garments, such as the *loros* or the *chlamys*, her lavish dress, jewelry, and impressive crown present her as a royal figure. By her side stands a tall basket from which she hands out her alms to a group of three figures dressed in monastic garb.[155] The group is associated with the following inscription: "Holy and good Charity teaches and manifests her own glory; and happy is he who will do and will teach."[156] The group of monks is identified as *ΕΛΕΗΜΟΝΕC*, the charitable. The image serves as direct illustration for Psalm 36(37)/26: "He is ever merciful and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." Corrigan has shown that the image of Almsgiving is intended as a juxtaposition of the representation of the simoneous John the Grammarian on the verso of the same folio illustrating verses 35-6 of the same Psalm: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."[157] The olive branches laden with fruit on the illustration of f.35r are juxtaposed with the textual image of the bay tree symbolizing the wicked on the next page, thus weaving a broader context for its interpretation.[158]

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mittelalterliche Byzanz, 725-1204 , p. 51. Corrigan noted that the representations of Charity are not included in the Pantokrator Psalter; while it is unclear whether they were included in Paris gr. 20 as the corresponding pages are missing, see Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* , pp. 128, 201, no. 31.

[154] Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," p. 347.

[155] Corrigan interpreted the image as Almsgiving giving out her alms with her left hand while she receives coins in her right hand, see Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* , p. 29.Corrigan notes that this page was heavily over-painted and that possibly the male figures originally did not wear monastic dress.

[156] *Η ΑΓΙΑ Κ(ΑΙ) ΜΑΚΑΡΙΑ ΕΛΕΗΜΟCΥΝΗ ΔΙΔΑCΚΕΙ Κ(ΑΙ) ΔΕΙΚΝΥΕΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΑΥΤΗC ΔΟΞΑΝ Κ(ΑΙ) ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC ΟCΤΙC ΠΟΙΗCΗ Κ(ΑΙ) ΔΙΔΑΞΗ.* English translation in ibid. , p. 29.

[157] Ibid. , pp. 29, 112.

[158] F.116 of the Chludov Psalter (Fig. 171) shows a non-imperial male figure with branches on his head personifying Almsgiving and illustrating Ps. 111(112)/9: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; this righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour." Inscription: "the almsgiving man; the poor." See Ščepinka and Dujcev, *Miniatjury Chludovskoj Psaltyri: Greceskij illjustrirovannyj kodeks 9 veka* , no. 116.

The Barberini Psalter, Vatican gr. 372 represents Almsgiving on f. 63v as an empress dressed in the *loros* and wearing a tall crown with olive branches (Fig. 173).[159] Here the figure is shown enthroned with a tall basket standing next to her footstool. Behind the basket a group of monks line up to receive alms from her hand. This image also illustrates Psalm 36/26.[160]

Almsgiving was closely related to and somewhat overlapping with the virtue of philanthropy, in fact, it was one of the manifestations of philanthropy. Philanthropy was understood as a primary attribute of god, and theologians suggested that it was due to God's philanthropic nature that the incarnation of Christ, and the redemption of mankind, was made possible.[161] For emperors, as imitators of Christ, the virtue of philanthropy was of central importance and is found as a pivotal attribute in discourses about kingship and political philosophy.[162]

The olive (*elaia*) has been strongly linked with the notion of wealth and charity from an early period.[163] This connection is perhaps based on a perceived association between the roots of the two words, *elaia* and *eleemoisyne*.[164] Basil of Caesarea writes about the olive tree as follows:

> Let us be like the olive tree, glorious with good works in the house of the Lord, which is not stripped of its leaves or deprived of its fruit. Let us take in ourselves the likeness of the olive with its perpetual greenness and of its fruits that provide

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[159] Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , pp. 78-79; Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," p. 350; ibid Anderson et al. suggest that the gender of this figure is indeterminable, however, the identification below the figure *(H ΕΛΕΗΜΟCΥΝΗ)* clearly suggests that we should understand the figure as a female personification; it is likely that the artist had a difficulty rendering the *thorakion* of the empress's *loros* on a seated three-quarter view figure, and thus left it out from the representation.

[160] The same passage is illustrated in the Theodore Psalter (Brit. Libr. Add 19352), ca. 1066 on f. 43v where an enthroned emperor with branches decorating his crown distributes alms (Fig. 172). The Barberini Psalter also contains another personification of Almsgiving, this time represented as a standing emperor (with olive branches in his crown) handing out alms to three monks on f. 196r (Fig. 174); the image illustrates Ps. 111/8-9: "He has given to the poor," see Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 132.

[161] Demetrios J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthorpy and Social Welfare (2nd ed.)* (New Rochelle, NY: 1991), pp. 25-32.

[162] Ibid. , pp. 33-42.

[163] Ibid. , p. 21.

[164] For an exploration of the linguistic connections between the two terms, see Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," pp. 359-361.

> refreshment. At all times let us pour mercy and kindness on all men. And through hope in God let us persist in the faith which we have for the future life.[165]

The evergreen quality of the olive tree and the richness of its fruit furnish the basis for Basil's simile likening the olive tree to the practice of continuous mercy towards one's fellow men.[166]

St. John Chrysostom called almsgiving the queen of virtues in *Homily 3, Concerning Almsgiving and the Ten Virgins*:

> . . . let me escort you to a fourth road toward repentance. Which one? I mean almsgiving, our excellent counselor, the queen of the virtues (ten basilida ton areton) who quickly raises human beings to the heavenly vaults.
> Almsgiving is a great thing. For this reason Solomon exclaimed, "Man is great, and a merciful man precious." Almsgiving's wings are great. She cleaves the air, surpasses the moon, and goes beyond the sun's rays. She rises up to the very vaults of the heavens. She does not stop there; rather, she surmounts heaven and overtakes the multitudes of angels, the choirs of archangels, and all the high powers, and she stands next to the royal throne. And you shall be taught from this very Scripture that says, "Cornelius, your prayers and your alms have ascended before God." "Before God" means that even if you have many sins, you should not be afraid if you possess almsgiving as your advocate. For no higher power opposes it. She pays the debt demanded by sin. She has her own bill of sale that she holds in her hands. For it is the Lord's own voice that says, "As you did it to one of the last of these, you did it to me." Therefore, regardless of how many other sins you have, your almsgiving counterbalances all of them.[167]

Clearly, Almsgiving is presented as a queen or empress of all Christian virtues and is described as a figure of high standing in the heavenly court right next to the divine throne of the king of heaven. In the same homily Chrysostom uses the parable of the wise and

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[165] Basil of Caesarea, *Homily Five of the Hexaemeron*, ch. 6, PG 29, 109A; for the English translation of the Syriac version, see Robert W. Thomson, *The Syriac Version of the Hexaemeron by Basil of Caesarea, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 551. Scriptores Syri, tomus 223.* (Louvain: 1995), p. 64. Also see, Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," pp. 356-358.

[166] Even the *Oneirocriticon of Achmet* links the olive tree with wealth and graciousness: "The olive tree denotes a gentle, gracious, and wealthy man. . . . If someone dreams that while lifted up into an olive tree he was harvesting the olives, he will receive from a gentle and gracious man bitterness and sorrow because of the olive's astringency; and if the ate some of the olives, he will endure sorrowful and evil days in proportion to the number of olives. If he dreams that he took some of the tree's leaves, he will get through clothing wealth from an honored and successful man." See Steven M. Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet : a Medieval Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams* (Texas Tech University Press, 1991), p. 198.

[167] Gus George Christo, *St. John Chrysostom On Repentance and Almsgiving* (Washington, D.C.: 1997), pp. 30-31; for the Greek text, see PG 49, 277-350.

foolish virgins to elaborate on the significance of almsgiving, and suggests: "For virginity is the light, and almsgiving is the oil. Therefore when the light does not have oil to burn safely and steadily, it is extinguished. Virginity is likewise extinguished when it lacks almsgiving."[168] Chrysostom underscores the primary importance of almsgiving as a Christian virtue without which other virtues loose their efficacy and become meaningless.[169] By identifying Almsgiving with lamp oil he creates a connection between the virtue and the olive tree.[170]

A seventh century text from the vita of the seventh century saint, John the Almsgiver describes the personification of Almsgiving as beautiful and richly dressed young princess with a headdress made out of live branches:

> When I was in Cyprus and was but a stripling of about fifteen years old, I saw one day in my sleep a certain maiden whose countenance outshone the sun and who was adorned beyond all human imagining, and she came and stood by my bed and touched me on the side. I woke up and saw her really standing there and I perceived that she was no woman. I crossed myself and said to her: 'Who are you, and how did you dare to come into my room while I was sleeping?' She had, too, a wreath of live branches on her head. And then with a joyous countenance and a smile on her lips she said to me: 'I am the first of the daughters of the king.' On hearing this I at once did obeisance to her. And then she said to me: 'If you will have me as a friend, I will lead you into the presence of the King. For no one has as free access to him as I have. For I caused Him to put on man's nature on earth and bring salvation to men.' With these words she disappeared.
> When I came to myself I understood the vision and said, 'Verily she is either Sympathy (*sympatheia*) or Charity (*eleemosyne*), and for this reason she had a wreath of olive leaves on her head. For it was certainly sympathy with, and pity for mankind that made our Lord come incarnate in our flesh.' I dressed quickly and without waking anyone in the house I made my way to the church.[171]

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[168] Gus George Christo, *St. John Chrysostom On Repentance and Almsgiving* (Washington, D.C.: 1997), p. 32.

[169] Chrysostom's homily about Almsgiving develops ideas found in Corinthians 13, see ibid. , p. xvi.

[170] For an exploration of the symbolic connection between the olive tree and the virtue of piety and almsgiving, see also the 10th discourse (262, 23-32) of the Symposium by the third-fourth century author, Methodios of Olympos, see PG 18:9-408. For English translation, see Herbert Musurillo, *St. Methodius: The Symposium. A Treatise on Christian Charity, Ancient Christian Writers* (London: 1958), Logos 10, pp. 140-149. For Methodios of Olympos, see Musurillo, *St. Methodius: The Symposium. A Treatise on Christian Charity* , pp. 3-5; ODB II, p. 1354.

[171] *Life of Saint John the Almsgiver*, ch. 8, for the English translation, see Elizabeth Dawes and Norman H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Oxford: 1948), p. 215. For John the Almsgiver, see Dawes and Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* , pp. 195-198, and ODB II, pp. 1058-1059. For a discussion and French translation of the passage, see Antonopoulous, "Miséricorde, olivier: agents et attributs," pp. 362-363.

The passage clearly links together notions associated with the olive (i.e. sympathy and charity for mankind) and the royalty of the virtue of Almsgiving, as she introduces herself as the first daughter of the king or literally as the primary virtue of Christ. The passage also makes it clear that the olive branches forming a headdress had been a popular attribute of the personification of Almsgiving from an early period.

The next two visual examples to be discussed place an emphasis on Almsgiving as an imperial virtue. A 10th century manuscript, Princeton Garrett 14, contains a triple imperial portrait on f.134v illustrating John Chrysostom's homily on Almsgiving (Fig. 169). The imperial figures are not identified, however, the date of the manuscript is known from an inscription on f.295r, which dates its completion to May 3, 6463 (i.e. 955 AD).[172] The three faces are highly schematized; they show a long bearded, mature emperor, a short bearded emperor, and a figure with clean face who may be identified as a woman or young emperor. As the manuscript dates to the reign of Constantine VII and Romanos II, two identifications of the imperial portraits are possible: they either show Romanos II as boy with his father Constantine VII and grandfather Leo VI, or Constantine VII with his wife Helena and their son Romanos II. It is perhaps more likely that the image shows Romanos II with his parents, as he was 16 years old at the time of the completion of the manuscript and could have been represented as a young man with a beard. Rather than using a personification of Almsgiving, this manuscript places imperial portraits in conjunction with the homily on Almsgiving underscoring that Almsgiving is a primary imperial virtue.

A petite *tetraevangelion* from the first quarter of the twelfth century, Urb. gr. 2, contains two representations that include female personifications in imperial garb.[173] On

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[172] Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* , p. 12.

[173] Parchment, 13.7 x 18.5 cm; Cosimo Stornajolo, *Codices Urbanites graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae* (Vatican City: 1895), p. 3-8; Cosimo Stornajolo, *Miniature delle omilie di Giacomo Monaco (cod. Vatic. gr. 1162) e dell'evangeliario greco Urbanite (cod. Vatic. urbin. gr. 2)* (Rome: 1910), p. 93, pls. 83-91; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 79-83; Jeffrey C. Anderson, "The Past Reanimated in Byzantine Illumination," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. Doula et al. Mouriki (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 319-24; Evans and Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* , pp. 209-210, fig. 144; Mutafian, *Roma - Armenia* , p. 111, fig. IV,23. For a discussion of the date of the manuscript, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 82-83. For a discussion of group of twelfth century gospel books of small size, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Diminutive Byzantine Manuscripts," *Codices Manuscripti* 6 (1980): pp. 130-61.

f.19v the emperor John II Komnenos and his son Alexius stand side by side dressed in identical garments (Fig. 175).[174] The enthroned Christ hovering above their heads blesses their crowns. Behind the throne of Christ appear two female figures in imperial garb affectionately whispering into his ears from each side while nudging him on the shoulder with their left and right hand. The figures wear wide sleeved garments with jewel-studded strips on their shoulders and elaborate, double tiered crowns. The figure on Christ's right, in the privileged position, is Eleemosyne clad in a purple garment, identical in color with the lower garment of Christ, while the figure on his left is Dikaiosyne in a blue garment matching the upper cloak of Christ. The matching colors used on the garments of Christ and his two handmaidens create the impression that Eleemosyne and Dikaiosyne are physically emerging from his body as he is bestowing his virtues on the emperors below.

On f.21r of the same manuscript the figure of an empress grasps an elegantly snaking vine branch in her right hand forming the initial B of the first word of the gospel of Mathew (Fig. 176). Above appears a portrait of the evangelist engaged in writing, while the facing page, f.20v shows the birth of Christ appropriately as Mathew's gospel begins with the genealogy of Christ and continues with an account of his birth. The inscription to the left of the female figure is only partially legible, but it clearly starts with her identification as Eleemosyne. The figure is dressed as an empress in the female *loros* with the *thorakion* and a lower garment with wide sleeves reflecting the fashion at the end of the eleventh century. She wears a tall crown and heavy, curly locks frame her face, with two tighter locks of hair falling in front of her shoulder. The branch grasped by the empress does not appear to be an olive branch laden with fruit as on other representations of Eleemosyne, rather it adapts the iconography for the new context rendering the figure with a stylized vine branch, fitting for the narrative of the birth of Christ. As Almsgiving was considered to be a primary Christian virtue, it is apt that her figure would appear at the beginning of the narrative of the life of Christ. It has been suggested that the figure of Almsgiving may be a disguised portrait of the empress Irene,

[174] The same figures are represented on a mosaic panel on the south gallery of Hagia Sophia, where they appear in the presence of the Virgin and Irene, the wife of John II Komnenos (Fig. 96).

the wife of John II Komnenos and mother of Alexius.[175] While the representation of Almsgiving should not be taken as a portrait of Irene, it may have been intended as a reference to her as she was revered for her charitable activities.[176] Her biographer attests:

> Having been crowned and raised to the imperial post, she ignored all things and thoughts, which seemingly were so important, and founded the imperial monastery in honor of the Almighty Christ, our God and Redeemer. She had splendid churches, alms-houses, and houses for refuge for the aged built in it which in beauty, arrangement, and equipment surpassed all similar institutions, either old or new.[177]

Yet the figure of Almsgiving was also understood as a reference to the emperor and his son, and her contemporary imperial dress linked her directly with them and their charitable activities. As the emperors receive the virtue of Almsgiving on the dedicatory miniature from Christ, here the virtue has taken action and is now an active imperial agent carrying out good works for the benefit of the empire and of Christ.

Sion, the Holy City

Allegorical figures dressed in the garb of the empress on occasion also personify the Holy City of Sion (or Jerusalem) in middle Byzantine manuscripts. On f.51r of the Chludov Psalter a female figure dressed in the loros and identified as *Η ΑΓΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΣ* personifies the holy city (Fig. 177). The page belongs to a series of four representations that show various images of the church at Mount Sion.[178] Here, the church is shown with a staircase leading up to the structure in front of which stands the gray haired David looking up and gesturing towards the entrance to the church. Behind him Saul appears enthroned in the company of a soldier. To the right of the staircase stands a female figure clad in the imperial *loros* and points in the direction of David and the church structure above her. The representation illustrates Psalm 50(51):20(18) "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem." F.88r of the Barberini Psalter

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[175] Stornajolo, *Codices Urbanites graeci Bibliothecae Vaticanae* , p. 79.
[176] Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantium and the Magyars* (Budapest: 1970), p. 76.
[177] Quoted in ibid. , p. 72.
[178] Ščepinka and Dujcev, *Miniatjury Chludovskoj Psaltyri: Greceskij illjustrirovannyj kodeks 9 veka* , no. 51; Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* , p. 96.

contains a similar representation illustrating the same psalm passage (Fig. 178).[179] The London Psalter illustrates the same passage on f. 65r, where a similar structure is shown as on the previous illuminations, here, however, the personification stands inside an arched opening. The figure is dressed in the female *loros* with the *thorakion* and points with her right hand up to the temple above her.[180] Although the figure is not inscribed, her association with the passage clearly identifies her as the personification of Sion. The London Psalter contains another similar representation on f.130r, where the figure of Sion appears in front of a portico in the orant position. The image illustrates Psalm 96(97):8 "Zion heard and, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord." In other marginal Psalters this passage is not illustrated with an empress-like Sion figure.[181] Der Nersessian noted that here the personification of Sion was juxtaposed with a representation of idolaters whose image has been cut off the page and suggested that the figure of Sion embodied proper orthodox iconophile sentiment.[182] On f.134v illustrating of the London Psalter the resurrected Christ appears in front of the church of Sion and blesses a nimbed and crowned female figure whose head pears out from the building and who gestures with her right hand emphatically towards Christ. Christ is emerging from the underworld represented as a dark rectangular box with the bound Hades inside it. The female figure is identified as Sion.[183] The representation illustrates Psalm 101(102):14(13) "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come."[184]

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[179] The figure is inscribed as *Η ΑΓΙΑ ΠΟΛΙC*, and is dressed in imperial regalia. Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 88; Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen age* (Paris: 1970), fig. 328.

[180] Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen age* , II, p. 33, fig. 105.

[181] Ibid. , II, p. 47, fig. 210; André Grabar, "L'art religieux et l'Empire Byzantin a l'époque des Macédoniens," in *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen age* (Paris: 1968 (reprint)), pp. 151-68, especially pp. 167-168. Also see Der Nersessian's comment about the misunderstanding of the original composition of the Chludov Psalter by the later illuminators of the London and Barberini Psalters, see ibid., pp. 68-69. Also see Christopher Walter, "'Latter-day' Saints in the Model for the London and Barberini Psalters," *REB* (1988): pp. 211-28, especially p. 223; Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 49.

[182] Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des psautiers grecs du moyen age* , p. 86, she also speculated that the figure evoked the memory of the iconophile empress, Theodora.

[183] Ibid. , pp. 48, 85.

[184] For a similar representation in the Chludov Psalter, see f.100v, here, however, the female figure is not represented as an empress. Corrigan noted, that she may be identified either as the Virgin or as the personification of Sion, see Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* , p. 101.

Sion had a deeply significant position in the thought and physical world of Christian thinkers. It was understood as the place from where the Messaiah would come and was consequently seen as the symbol of the New Covenant while the church built on Mount Sion was referred to as the Mother of all Churches by early Christian writers.[185] Grabar proposed that the representation of Holy Land sites in the marginal Psalters might have reflected iconophile concerns as they furnished physical evidence of the historical person and life of Christ and thus testified to his incarnation – a fundamental proof for the legitimacy of religious images.[186] Corrigan, on the other hand emphasized that such representations reflected the threat of the spreading Islam in the Holy Land reported by Palestinian Christians fleeing to Constantinople.[187] The representation of Sion in the guise of an empress makes the strong visual statement that the city of Jerusalem and its holy Christian sites are understood to be part of the orthodox Byzantine world and under the auspices of the Byzantine emperor, a concern, no doubt particularly acute under the threat of Islam.[188] On the other hand, Sion dressed as an empress also links the holy sites of Palestine with female imperial authority, after all it was two empresses, Irene and Theodora, who championed the case of icons and managed to defeat Iconoclasm and reestablish orthodoxy.

F.225r of the Barberini Psalter shows a seated empress in a purple robe and gold *loros* in a frontal representation (Fig. 179). She is glancing to her left and holds the *akakia* in her left hand while lifts her right hand in front of her chest. The accompanying inscription identifies the figure as *H BASIΛIA T(ON) XPICTIANω(N)*, the Empire of the Christians. The figure illustrates Psalm 133(134)/3 and 134/1-2: "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion. Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord."[189] Walter suggested that this representation

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[185] See Hebrews 12:22ff, Romans 11:26. Also see ibid. , p. 52.
[186] André Grabar, "Quelques notes sur les psautiers illustrés byzantins du IXe siècle," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 15 (1965): pp. 61-82.
[187] Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters* , pp. 97-101.
[188] See also Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 41-42, no. 129.
[189] Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 138. In the London Psalter a similar personification illustrates the same passage on f.173v, the imperial figure, however, is shown as a beardless youth rather than an empress, see Der Nersessian, *L'illustration des*

served as an allusion to Constantinople as "it was held in the 11th century, the empire had been transferred (here) from Rome."[190]

The Queen of the Season of Spring and of New Sunday

Gregory Nazianzenus' homily *On New Sunday* which was read during the liturgy on the Sunday following Easter, also called the Sunday of Thomas, is decorated on f.26r with two personifications in the guise of empresses in a late eleventh century illuminated manuscript of Gregory's liturgical homilies, Paris Coislin 239 (Fig. 180).[191] The sermon celebrates the rebirth of the human soul in Christ and parallels it with the renascence and beauty of the natural world in springtime.[192] From the surviving illuminated copies of Gregory's homilies only the Paris manuscript illustrates the passage "The Queen of the Spring/Hours conducts/escorts the Queen of the Days and brings all her most beautiful and delightful gifts"[193] with the allegorical figures dressed as empresses. Inscriptions identify the personifications dressed in imperial garments and holding globes as the Queen of the Spring/Hours and the Queen of the Days, as mentioned in the text of the homily.[194] In a hymn by John the Monk celebrating the Sunday after Easter Christ is described as the sun and ruler of the world, while two empresses appear as embodiments

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psautiers grecs du moyen age , p. 55, fig. 275; Grabar, "L'art religieux et l'Empire Byzantin a l'époque des Macédoniens," p. 168.

[190] Walter, "'Latter-day' Saints in the Model for the London and Barberini Psalters," p. 224; Anderson, Canart, and Walter, *The Barberini Psalter, Codex Vaticanus Graecus 372* , p. 49; for the notion of the empire in Constantinople, see Jean Darrouzès, "Sur les prerogative des metropolites," in *Documents inédits d'ecclésiologie byzantine* (Paris: 1966), p. 146.

[191] Parchment, 26.2 x 21 cm. See Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens mansucrits grecs de la Bibliothèque National du VIe au XIVe siècle* , pp. 54-56, pls. CXVI-CXVIII, George Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus, Studies in Manuscript Illumination, Number 6* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 246-249.

[192][192] PG 36, 608-621. Also see Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus* , p. 149; Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 43.

[193] Elias Antonopoulous, "Basilike pompe: allegorika prosopa sten anastase tes Decani," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* (1994): pp. 87-98, especially p. 96. I thank Zinon Papakonstantinou for his help in reading this article.

[194] *Η βασιλισσα τ(ων) ωρων. Τω εαρ τ(ων) (δε) ημερ(ων)/ η καινη Κυ(ριακη).*

of Spring and the New Sunday celebrating the renewal of the world brought by the resurrection of Christ:[195]

> To-day is the spring of souls, for Christ, shining from the tomb like the sun, has dispelled the foggy winter of our sin. Let us sing to him, for he has been glorified. The queen of seasons (*he basilis ton horon*), filled with light, as escort to the brilliant queen of days (*hemeron te basilidi*), delights the chosen people of the Church, which unceasingly praises the risen Christ.
> Neither death's gates, O Christ, nor the seals of the tomb, nor the bolts of the doors stood in your way; but having risen you came to your friends, O Master (*despota*), giving them the peace which passes all understanding.[196]

Although representations of these personifications in Byzantine art are rare,[197] the practice of personifying seasons or days with female figures draws on the tradition of Greco-Roman art.[198] The texts refer to spring and Sunday as queens, as they are understood as first among the seasons and first among the days as defined by the temporal aspects of Christ's resurrection. Female personifications also appeared in the visual context of Christ's resurrection in the Paris gr. 510, here, however, the emphasis was place on the two days of the resurrection of Christ, through the representation of Saint Paraskeve as Good Friday and St. Helena as Easter Sunday.

Conclusion

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[195] Bartalomaios Koutloumousianos, *Pentekostarion* (Athens: 1959), p. 28, Oda A.
[196] Ibid. , p. 28, Oda A. For the English translation, see Archimandrite Ephrem: *Sunday of Antipascha or the Handling by the Holy Apostle Thomas* at http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem/ThomasSun.htm.
[197] Antonopoulous argued persuasively that the two empress figures in discs held by angles in the mid-fourteenth century fresco of the Anastasis at the Church of the Pantokrator at Decani are representations of the Queen of Spring and Queen of Days, and also suggested that the empress figure of the fourteenth century Meteora icon from the Monastery of Transfiguration showing the Doubting Thomas should also be understood in this sense, see Antonopoulous, "Basilike pompe: allegorika prosopa sten anastase tes Decani." For a different view on the interpretation of the figures at Decani, see Zaga Gavrilovic, "Byzantine East, Latin West: Art Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann," (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 225-30, who argues, that the figures represent the recently saved Adam and Eve. For a discussion of the iconography of the saint Kyriake (the personification of Sunday), see Smiljka Gabelic, "St. Kyriaki in Wallpainting of Cyprus," *Kypriake archaiologia=Archaeologia Cypria* 1 (1985): pp. 115-19; Gabelic describes several twelfth century and later examples where Kyriake is represented in the guise of the Byzantine empress. For the syanxis of Kyrike celebrated on July 7, see Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , pp. 805-806.
[198] See, for instance a discussion of the iconography of the seasons in Roger Hinks, *Myth and Allegory in Ancient Art* (London: 1939), pp. 43-51.

One of the primary concerns of representations of empresses in surviving Byzantine manuscript is the visual expression of the role of the empress in establishing and maintaining the ruling dynasty. The imperial family portrait that comes down to us in the Paris Gr. 510 shows the imperial couple, Basil I and Eudokia Ingerina with two of their children, their oldest sons and in the company of holy protectors, Elijah and Gabriel. The imperial couple do not appear standing side by side as is typical on later imperial family portraits, but appear on separate, facing pages accompanied by the other figures. The image emphatically articulates the legitimacy of Basil's rule through the presence and protection of a saint and an angel (the latter is even visually linked to the emperor and the whole imperial family through his identical *loros* dress). Eudokia appearing on the facing page flanked by their young sons is portrayed as a vital and physical link between the emperor and the children, and thus becomes an embodiment of the dynastic hopes for Basil's lineage.

Similar concerns are expressed in the representation of Eudokia Makrembolitissa and her family in the Paris Gr. 922. Here, however, the imperial family appears within one composition as a more integrated unit. The rule of the imperial parents is sanctioned by the blessing of the Virgin placed in the center of the composition, and Eudokia's importance and role is articulated first through her appearance alongside her husband as an equal partner in receiving divine sanction to rule, and second, through the male offspring flanking the couple she produced to continue the imperial family.

The imperial family portraits in the Barberini Psalter and in the Leningrad Psalters place an imperial child in the center of the compositions while the imperial parents flank him. Clearly, in these examples the boys are shown as the single, designated heirs of their fathers, and their mothers are present to emphasize the strength and legitimacy of the dynastic succession.

The family portrait of Sinai Gr. 364 shows somewhat different concerns. Here the last two surviving members of the Macedonian blood line, the sisters Zoe and Theodora flank Zoe's husband, Constantine Monomachos. The image links the ruling emperor with the past glory of the Macedonian House, and integrates him as one of his members, even though he only 'married into' the prestigious bloodline. A representation

of both his wife and sister-in-law along with the emperor ensured that his rule was presented as fully legitimate and also portrayed the emperor as a protector of the Macedonian lineage, which by this time has acquired such importance and glory in the mind of even average Byzantines.

The Coislin 79 offers a unique cycle of imperial portraits, showing Michael VII/Nikephoros Botaniates as a patron of learning, a splendid emperor enthroned majestically in his court, and in the presence of his wife, Maria of Alania. Here the emphasis appears to be on the nature of imperial power, rather than dynastic concerns, and the empress is portrayed in her role as a divinely sanctioned consort equal to her husband, although this understanding of the role of the empress is in direct competition with the representation of the emperor and his court hierarchy within the same manuscript, which leaves no room for the empress (although bestows divine attributes onto the emperor through female personifications dressed like empresses).

The representations of recently canonized female imperial saints in the Menologion of Basil II reflect dynastic concerns of a different sort than the first four manuscripts whose focus was on the continuity of the family's bloodline. Here the legitimacy of the dynasty is linked with the promotion of orthodox female saints from members of the ruling dynasty and the preceding dynasty. While the selection of the empresses Theophano and Theodora for the Menologion may have been prompted by personal predilections of Basil II himself, they also reflect wider attempts at sanctifying members of the imperial house, and may be linked with popular devotion to the empress Theophano.

Linking the imperial house with notions of orthodoxy and proper doctrine may be also found in the representations of Constantine and Helena in the Paris Gr. 510. Here, the emerging Macedonian Dynasty linked its rule with female authority and orthodoxy through the person of Helena, the discoverer of the True Cross, and with orthodox rule through Constantine, the first Christian emperor. Moreover, the portrayal of Helena as a personification of Easter Sunday further enhanced the linkage between imperial authority and Christian triumph.

The imperial portraits in the Leningrad Psalter lend themselves to be read as personifications; the family portrait on f. 1r portrays the imperial family as the blessed referred to in the text of the accompanying psalm, while on f. 311v the imperial couple signals a connection between the text and the liturgy performed in imperial monasteries.

Visual representations of empresses as allegorical figures or personifications only come down to us in manuscripts. The important Christian virtue, Almsgiving appears in the guise of the empress, as it was considered the queen of virtues and was both an attribute of god, fundamentally defining his relationship toward mankind, and man. A series of texts attest to such understanding of Almsgiving and provide the textual source for the visual features of her representation as an empress sporting a headdress made out of olive branches laden with fruit; although within the manuscripts that include representations of Almsgiving there is no textual reference to their royal nature. The holy city, Sion was also personified as an empress in illuminations of marginal Psalters. Here the image of Sion as an empress does not derive from the texts of the Psalters, but reflects the old tradition of personifying cities through the representation of female figures with crenellated crowns, as well as with notions that Sion is the embodiment of the universal church, also personified as a woman. The figure of Sion as an empress links imperial authority and orthodoxy with the Holy Land and the universal Christian church, threatened by Islam, and offers the guarantee of imperial protection. The personification of the season of Spring, and the New Sunday as an empress may also be linked with the ancient tradition of female personifications of the Horae, but it also demonstrates that notions of Christian triumph ensured by Christ sacrifice and resurrection were also linked with female imperial authority, as such ideas were already presented in the representation of Helena as Easter Sunday in the Paris Gr. 510. Perhaps it is due to Helena's role in the discovery of the True Cross and due to the popularity of Constantine and Helena in the Middle Byzantine period, that such notions were expressed in the personifications of Spring and New Sunday.

CHAPTER VIII: BEAUTY, BODY, GARMENT AND THE EMPRESS

Beauty

That female beauty was not necessarily an admired asset in medieval Byzantium is made clear by two poems of the 9th century nun and hymnographer, Kassia.[1] She asserts:

> It is not good for a woman to be beautiful;
> for beauty is distracting;
> but if she is ugly and ill mannered,
> without distraction it is twice as bad.
>
> It is moderately bad for women to have a radiant countenance
> yet beauty has its consolation;
> but if a woman is ugly
> what misfortune, what bad luck.[2]
>
> One should prefer a drop of luck
> than great beauty.
>
> It is better to possess grace form the Lord,
> Than beauty and wealth that does not gain grace.
>
> First comes beauty of countenance,
> And then a well-proportioned body and limbs.[3]

Kassia declares that being beautiful is not advantageous, and that luck and the grace of God are more desirable qualities, but also admits that ugliness is indeed a heavy burden

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[1] For Kassia, see Ilse Rochow, *Studien zur der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia, Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten 38* (Berlin: 1967). Kassia allegedly participated in the bride show held for the emperor Theophilos in the early ninth century, as reported in the narrative of Theophilos's bride show in I. Bekker, ed., *Leo Grammaticus* (Bonn: 1842), p. 213, by Symeon Magister, I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838), De Theophilo, ch. 1, pp. 624-625, and George the Monk, Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Theophilo, ch. 1, p. 790; for this episode, see Vinson's discussion in Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation*, vol. I, *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D. C.: Dumarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), p. 364, no.30, and Rochow, *Studien zur der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* , pp. 5-19. Kassia also exchanged letters with Theodore of Stoudios, see ODB II, p. 1109.

[2] Kassia: Woman 7-14; for the original text and its translation, see Antonia Tripolitis, *Kassia. The Legend, the Woman, and her Work* (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), pp. 120-121.

[3] Kassia: Beauty, for the original text and its translation, see ibid. , pp. 120-121.

for a woman. Yet when she discusses beauty a clear set of priorities emerge: a beautiful face is admired first while the shape and proportions of the rest of the body follow as second.

Despite the mixed feelings about female beauty in monastic and clerical circles as reflected in Kassia's poems,[4] physical beauty was the primary quality consistently discussed and praised in the appearance of empresses.[5] As Hill noted, "It is clear that the Byzantines deduced inner qualities from outer characteristics."[6] Although it is not until the eleventh century that detailed accounts of the appearance of imperial women come down to us,[7] earlier texts also indicate that beauty was a chief attribute of empresses in Byzantine ideology. In fact, five empresses in the eighth and ninth centuries were allegedly selected as brides for imperial heirs in bride shows, beauty pageants of sorts, in which candidates from all over the empire competed for the hand of the crown prince.[8] Typically the parents rather than the groom chose the bride, and according to the narratives the selection was based on how closely the girl conformed to a particular physical ideal.[9] One example of a bride-show held in 882 is reported in the *Life Theophano*, the saintly first wife of Leo VI:

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[4] Byzantine clerics were quite suspicious of female beauty, as indicated by the following passage of John Chrysostom: "The whole of her bodily beauty is nothing more than phlegm, blood, bile, rheum, and the fluid of undigested food. . . . If you consider what is stored up behind those lovely eyes, the angle of the nose, the mouth and cheeks you will agree that her well-proportioned body is nothing but a whitened sepulcher." John Chrysostom, To Theodore, 14, ed. and trans. Jean Dumortier, *Sources chrétiennes 117* (Paris: 1966), p. 167; for English translation, see Paul Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium" (Ph. D., Fordham University, 1999), p. 194. For the misogyny of church fathers, see Elizabeth A. Clark, "Sexual Politics in the Writings of John Chrysostom," in *Women in Early Christianity*, ed. David M. Scholer, *Studies in Early Christianity XIV* (New York, London: 1993), 233-50; Kevin J. Coyle, "The Fathers on Women and Women's Ordination," in *Women and Early Christianity*, ed. David M. Scholer, *Studies in Early Christianity XIV* (New York, London: 1993), 117-67; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Women in Early Christianity*, ed. David M. Scholer, *Studies in Early Christianity XIV* (New York, London: 1993), 262-95.

[5] Lynda Garland, "The Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Furher Note on Conventions of Behaviour and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources," *Byzantion* LVIII (1988): pp. 361-93, especially p. 387, in no. 111 she provides a list of sources that praised the beauty of imperial women of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

[6] Barbara Hill, "The Ideal Imperial Komnenian Woman," *Byzantinische Forschungen* XXIII (1996): pp. 7-17., especially p. 9.

[7] See for instance the descriptions of empresses in Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), or Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1969).

[8] For a list of the bride shows and their textual sources, see Appendix C: Byzantine Bride Shows.

[9] For a summary of the common features of the five bride-shows, see Warren T. Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* XLIX (1979): pp. 395-413, especially pp. 409-410.

> . . . when the great and venerable Basil, our absolute emperor, ruled the Roman Empire with his sons, a search was made for beautiful virgins, distinguished for their virtues, in order that one of them might be selected wife and consort of the Emperor Leo the Wise, his first son and co-emperor; he was a youth in full bloom and mature shining forth with purity and beauty, and he wanted a union of marriage. Archons, satraps and exarches of the Secret Bedchamber were sent out by the emperor to search every town and province for a girl worthy of the most handsome Emperor Leo. Various girls from various places were thus brought to the capital, but they were all blamed for various flaws, some with regard to beauty of appearance, others with regard to bloom of youth, for there was one chosen by God, although she remained hidden for a while [i.e. Theophano].[10]

The text goes on to describe how the girls were taken to Constantinople to participate in the pageant. After twelve contestants, including Theophano, were brought to the palace, the maidens decided that they themselves would divine who would be chosen from among them. They devised a plan; they would all sit on the floor with their shoes in front of them, and the first one to get up, put her shoes on and genuflect in front of the imperial couple upon their entrance should become the bride. And this indeed happened, with Theophano being the first to stand up and greet the emperors. Thus: "As she [i.e. the empress Eudokia, mother of the groom] also noticed from afar the beauty of her [i.e. Theophano's] face she abandoned all the others and went straight to her. Coming near her she scrutinized her beauty and inquired about her family and place of birth." Then Eudokia selected three finalists whom she took to the imperial baths for a thorough inspection ". . . examining them in a bath and finding that the saint [i.e. Theophano] by far surpassed the other two in beauty. . ."[11] she selected Theophano as Leo's bride.

Although the bride show narratives emphasize the outstanding beauty and virtue of imperial brides, they provide little information about the appearance of the maidens. While the *Life of Philaretos* attests that the proportions and size of the girl's body and the

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[10] Eduard ed. Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," *Mémoires de L'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg, VIIIe série* III, no. 2 (1898): I-XI, 1-132, ch. 8, p. 5; translated by L. Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" *Eranos* 83 (1985): pp. 175-91, especially p. 184.

[11] Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," ch. 9-10, pp. 5- 6; translated by Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" p. 185. The physical examination is also described in *Life of Philaretos*, see Martha Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 31-60, especially p. 58.

features of her face were of primary importance in the selection, since an imperial measure (*basilikon metron*), an ideal portrait (*lauraton*) and a shoe (*tzankgion*) were used by the search committee as the tools of judgment, the appearance of the girls is presented in the most general terms in the accounts. One of the competitors in the same pageant is described as "good-looking" by the narrator and characterized as "noblest, best-looking" by her own speech, while about the granddaughters of Philaretos is said that "they [i.e. the emperor and empress] amazed at their beauty and delighted by their dignity, their intelligence, and graceful way of moving."[12] No mention is made of the color of their hair and eyes, the appearance of their skin, the proportions of their bodies, the features of their faces. Similar reticence is found in the other bride-show narratives. Leo Grammatikos informs us that the bride-show of Theophilos was held in order to find "comely girls from all the *themata*" and the *Life of Theodora* mentions that Theodora was distinguished for "her natural beauty. In fact she was so [beautiful] that she was fit even for marriage to an emperor."[13] The *Life of Theodora* also emphasizes that in addition to beauty, Theodora possessed other virtues, such as moderation and fertility.[14] From the *Life of Theophano* we learn that she won in a competition that was "made for beautiful virgins, distinguished for their virtues" from girls ". . . worthy of the most handsome emperor Leo. Various girls from various places were thus brought to the capital, but they were all blamed for various flaws, some with regard to beauty of appearance, others with regard to bloom of youth. . . ." "The marvelous holy Theophano," Leo's bride, herself is distinguished by swiftness and alacrity in addition to the "beauty of her face" and she "by

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[12] Marie-Henriette Fourmy and Maurice Leroy, "La vie de S. Philarète," *Byzantion* 9 (1934): pp. 85-167, especially pp. 135-143. For English translation, see Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," pp. 398-399.

[13] Bekker, *Leo Grammaticus* , pp. 213-214, for English translation of the passage, see Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" p. 187; also see Symeon Magister in Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Theophilo, ch. 1, pp. 624-625. For the *Life of Theodora*, see A. Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," *Symmeikta* 5 (1983): pp. 249-85, for its English translation, see Vinson's translation in Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), pp. 361-382, especially p. 363.

[14] This is made clear by the anecdote of the apples. Theophilos selected seven girls as the final candidates, and presented all with an apple. The next morning he asked for the apple back, and it was only Theodora, who was able to give the apple back and in addition she also gave him a second apple which she received from a prophet she visited on the way to Constantinople who foresaw her elevation as empress and prophesied about her bearing a son for the emperor, see Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , ch. 3, pp. 363-365.

far surpassed the other two in beauty" who were selected as the final candidates.[15] Similarly, in the *Life of Irene of Chrysobalanton*, we hear that the bride-show was organized for a girl from an illustrious and orthodox family and it was expected that she ". . . should excel in moral beauty and spiritual nobility, and be distinguished by corporeal fairness so as to surpass all girls of her age."[16] It is Eudokia Ingerina, about whose appearance we learn the most although not from the description of the bride-show in which she participated but did not win, rather in a passage of the funeral oration for her husband, Basil I. The author, their son, the emperor Leo VI states:

> And he [i.e. Michael III, the reigning emperor] made to unite to the most handsome of all [i.e. Basil] a woman similar to him; and this woman, this woman who was best among women, was found. Born in a race that hardly yielded to anyone other than the one (female) of supreme rank, regarding the beauty and other qualities that are ornaments of women, she excelled so much that it is difficult to give an idea of it. She, alone, appeared neither more nor less to have conserved unaltered the splendor of the creation like she came from the hand of God. Who has had a similar symmetry of her features, who a complexion of a shade this perfect, without anything which would appear superfluous or useless in a composition of consummate beauty? Those, among the others, who seemed to be of great beauty, were taxed with ugliness when she appeared. In such a way she was united with the one, to whom since her birth, the Almighty united her.[17]

Although this passage also does not give a specific idea of Eudokia's appearance, it reveals some general principles about how beauty was judged by Byzantine beholders; clearly the symmetry of features and the harmony of proportions were highly prized along with splendid complexion.

Scholars have been debating whether the bride show was an actual historical event or merely a literary device,[18] yet all agree that the descriptions of the pageants can

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[15] Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," ch. 8-10, pp. 5-6; for translation see Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" pp. 184-185.

[16] For the Greek original and its translation, see Jan Olof Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* (Uppsala: 1986), pp. 8-9.

[17] For the Greek original and French translation, see A. Vogt and S. I. Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basil I par son fils Léon le sage," *Orientalia Christiana* 26 (1932): 5-79, especially pp. 53-55.

[18] This controversy has been summed up by a round table discussion at the 1996 International Congress on Byzantine Studies, see Judith Herrin and Lennart Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" (XIXth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Copenhagen, 1996), Major

never be taken at face value, as further texts inform us that there were always other motivations behind the selections of the brides than simply their beauty. Nevertheless, these narratives should not be dismissed as mere fairytales, as they reveal expectations of who and what the empress should be.[19] Whether literary fiction or historical custom, the bride-show as a motif reflects an increased interest in the person of the empress for it emerges ca. 800, after a period when very little was known of empresses.[20]

Papers, pp. 506-07. Hunger, Rochow, Treadgold, Schreiner, Hans, and Dagron accepted the bride-show to be a genuine Byzantine custom, see Herbert Hunger, "Die Schönhetiskonkurrenz in "Belthandros und Chrysantza" und die Brautschau am byzantinischen Kaiserhof," *Byzantion* 35 (1965): pp. 150-58; for the bride-shows of Constantine VI and Staurakios, see Ilse Rochow, *Byzanz im 8. Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes. Quellenkritisch-Historischer Kommentar zu den Jahren 715-813, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 57* (Berlin: Akademi Verlag, 1991), pp. 250, 288-289, for the bride-show of Theophilos, see Rochow, *Studien zur der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia* , pp. 5-19; Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," pp. 395-397, 421-413; Peter Schreiner, "Das Herrscherbild in der byzantinischen Literatur des 9. bis 11. Jahrhunderts," *Saeculum* 35, no. 2 (1984): pp. 132-51; Linda-Marie Hans, "Der Kaiser als Märchenprinz. Brautschau und Heiratspolitik in Konstantinopel 395-882," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988): pp. 33-52; Gilbert Dagron, "Nés dans la pourpre," *Travaux et mémoires* 12 (1994): pp. 105-42, especially pp. 137-141. While Herrin characterized the bride-show held for Constantine VI narrated in the *Life of Philaretos* as a rumor rather than an actual historical event, she conjectured that the story already circulated in the time of Irene and that it was cultivated by the empress herself, see Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), pp. 136-138. Rydén, Rosenquist, and Vinson argued vigorously against the existence of the bride-show, while Claudia Ludwig also came to the conclusions that bride-shows were most likely not an historical phenomenon, although she was more willing to see some kind of a historical kernel in them. Speck suggested that two bride-shows in particular, those of Constantine VI and Staurakios, should not be accepted as historical facts, and Afinogenov emphasized his skepticism with regard to the historicity of Theophilos' bride-show. See Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" p. 190-191; Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," pp. 42-45; Paul Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI. Die Legitimation einer fremden und der Versuch einer eigenen Herrschaft*, 2 vols. (Munich: 1978), pp. 203-207, 626-629; Claudia Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie und ihr literarisches Vorbild, Berliner Byzantinische Studien 3* (Frankfurt: 1997), pp. 104-109, 113, 128, 144; Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* , p. xxv; Dimitry Afinogenov, "The Bride-show of Theophilos: Some Notes on the Sources," *Eranos* 95 (1997): pp. 10-18.

[19] The only other text that provides general guidelines about imperial marriage policy in this period is found in *De Administrando Imperio* from the tenth century, here, however a different issue is discussed: the prohibition of marriage alliance between the imperial family with northern non-Roman, non-Christian "tribes." The only other "race" with which intermarriage is allowed is the Franks, see Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, trans. ed. Gyula Moravcsik and trsl. Romili J. H. Jenkins, vol. I, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), ch. 13, pp. 71-77. This text underscores the value of Byzantine princesses and intimates that the emperor should marry preferably from within the empire. *De Administrando Imperio* is a princely mirror, written by Constantine VII to his son Romanos II. It was a private, perhaps even secret document, that was only used in the court for no contemporary and later historians appear to have used it as a source, and only a few manuscripts of it survive, only one from the Byzantine period, see ibid., p. 32-33. Although *De Administrando Imperio* is a biased source, other sources confirm its report about the actual circumstances of imperial marriage policy in this period.

[20] For the origins of the bride show, see *The Origins of the Byzantine Bride Show* in Appendix C: Byzantine Bride Shows.

Bride show narratives are recounted in lives of saints, chronicles, and a funeral oration; and with two exceptions they emerged outside the imperial court although in contexts that had connections to imperial circles.[21] As has been demonstrated, these narratives were motivated by various political and personal agendas of their authors', and aimed to flatter or vilify particular emperors through the representation of the empress.[22] The transmission history of bride-show narratives and the literary influences detectable within this group of texts indicates that their stories were well known and popular in the ninth and tenth century Byzantium. Yet the indirect nature of the influence between the texts[23] suggests that the authors worked from a "motive pool"[24] that has become part of the collective consciousness of the ninth-tenth century Constantinople, rather than directly from written copies of previous bride-show narratives. The history of these manuscripts and texts permits an interpretation that goes beyond the particular motivations and circumstances from which each text emerged, since it is unlikely that the original biases and agendas of each author would have been quite as clearly discernible to those reading or hearing these narratives a few years, decades, or a century after their compositions. Even contemporaries, who were not members of the circles that produced these texts, may have been unaware of some of the underlying messages. For a Constantinopolitan of the ninth or tenth centuries the various stories of bride-shows might have even congealed into a kind of meta-narrative, in which the various accounts might be seen cumulatively, in connection with one another.

The bride-show became a popular motif in Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries, perhaps because it provided a rare locus where social high and low intersect: on the one hand, bride-show stories were not privileged information available only to members of the elite; on the other hand, they also articulated the entrance of someone of lower birth, at least in theory, to the highest rank of Byzantine society. Moreover, the

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[21] The two exceptions are the *Life of Theodora*, which may have come out of patriarchal or imperial circles and the *Funeral Oration of Leo*, which was drafted by the emperor himself. For a discussion of the manuscripts and audience of the bride show narratives, see *History of Transmission and Audience of the Middle Byzantine Bride-Show Motif* in Appendix C: Byzantine Bride Shows.

[22] See, Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show."

[23] The influence is noticeable at the level of narrative structure and motifs, but there are no verbatim agreements between passages or phrases in the various texts.

[24] See Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie und ihr literarisches Vorbild* , p. 145.

motif of the bride-show also propagated and maintained imperial ideology. It underscored the exceptional quality of the imperial office through the selection of the ideal bride for the emperor from all maidens of the empire, and in this way the empress became a symbolic embodiment of the empire as a whole united to its ruler. The motif upheld the ideology of social mobility for young women and their families, but also helped to strengthen the idea that the imperial power went to the most deserving man of the empire; the practice of the hereditary dynasty was combined with the theory of election of at least of the bride.[25] The motif obscures the political position of the bride's family, and creates a framework in which imperial ideology is translated into actions: the divinely sanctioned bride identified by the imperial parents. The motif places the bride center stage, as though her personal, god-given qualities were the decisive factor in her selection, and averts attention from the actual reasons. The motif obscures actual political alliances and family connections between the ruling dynasty and the bride's family, while suggesting that anyone, with the desirable qualities, can become empress. It nips in the bud any kind of contestation about why she was chosen, and offers beauty with its concomitant virtue as justification. Bride-shows explain away, justify the choice of an imperial wife upholding an ideal that is a far cry from actual practice dictated by *realpolitik*. Moreover, the popularity of the bride-show motif comes in a period when empresses started to regain a stature in imperial politics that they did not appear to have had for several centuries, as empresses had little visible influence and authority in the period 641-780.[26] It is from this context that Irene emerged and gained power first as regent and later as sole ruler ca. 780. Following her reign, in the early ninth century women acquired an essential role in imperial succession and gained greater influence in the exercise of political power. This growing influence of empresses is intentionally obscured by these texts, yet it is implicitly present in the original aspirations and

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[25] Dagron noted that the bride-show served to create a framework within which the imperial blood could be united with common blood, similarly to situations when the imperial daughter or the empress legitimized the accession of an emperor of common blood. He also noted that: "it was the 'son of the emperor' who required form a wife 'without birth' the indispensable complement constituted by election and excellence." See Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest. The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 48.

[26] Judith Herrin's recent book is devoted to an analysis of "feminine prominence" of the late eighth and first half of the ninth century, see Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* . Also see Appendix D: Empresses of the Late Seventh through the Mid-ninth Century.

motivations behind their compositions. Because empresses gained political stature, it was appropriate to use them as a means of access to reach the ear of the emperor - an appropriate response to the actual politics of the period.

More information about the appearance of empresses comes down to us from the eleventh century as a growing interest is revealed in descriptions of physical appearance and demeanor in the work of historians and panegyrists.[27] The erudite princess, Anna Komnena left behind a series of verbal portraits of empresses in her chronicle, the Alexiad. Among these we find a description of Maria of Alania, a princess from Georgia and empress of Byzantium between 1067-81:

> She was in fact very tall, like a cypress tree; her skin was snow-white; her face was oval, her complexion wholly reminiscent of a spring flower or a rose. As for the flash of her eyes, what mortal could describe it? Eyebrows, flame-colored, arched above the eyes of light blue.[28] A painter's hand has many times reproduced the colors of all the flowers brought into birth each in its own season, but the beauty of the empress, the grace that shone about her, the charming attractiveness of her ways, these seemed to baffle description, to be beyond the artist's skill. Neither Apelles, nor Pheidias, nor any of the sculptors ever created such a work. The Gorgon's head, so they say, turned men who saw her to stone, but a man who saw the empress walking, or who suddenly met her, was stupefied, rooted to the spot where he happened to be and speechless, apparently deprived in that one moment of all feeling and reason.[29] Such was the proportion and perfect symmetry of her body, each part in harmony with the rest, that no one till then had ever seen its like among human-kind – a living work of art, and object of desire to lovers of beauty. She was indeed Love incarnate, visiting as it were this earthly world.[30]

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[27] Garland and Hill analyzed the texts that describe eleventh and twelfth century empresses in detail, see Lynda Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," *Byzantion* LXIV (1994): pp. 19-39, 261-313; Hill, "The Ideal Imperial Komnenian Woman," especially pp. 8-11.

[28] Spatharakis believes that the term *haropos* should not be translated as light blue in this context; the original meaning of the term was bright eyed, and only later came to mean gray or blue color. See Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), pp. 109, no. 47.

[29] Psellos uses a similar topos regarding the impact of the beauty of Zoe Porphyrogenita had on those who met her, attesting that they fell to the ground in admiration, although Psellos emphasizes that this act was performed by courtiers in order to gain the benevolence of the empress, see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book Six, ch. 157, p. 238.

[30] Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* , Book 3/2, p. 107. Anna Komnena also used similar metaphors in her description of her parents, whom she described as "living statues", suggesting that her father's beauty even eclipsed the harmonious splendor of the canon of Polykleitos, while her mother was an incarnation of the goddess Athena, see ibid., pp. 109-110.

The same empress appears alongside her husband on f.1(2bis)v of a sumptuously decorated manuscript in Paris, Coislin 79 (Fig. 163). There are correspondences between Maria's portrait and her description by Anna Komnena, namely the perfectly oval face, the red tint and high arch of the eyebrow, and the overall impression of beauty and elegance. Maria is also shown with rich auburn hair, not described in the text, but matching the color of her eyebrows mentioned by Anna Komnena. Maria appears as tall as her husband more likely for the sake of symmetry than to indicate her actual height. The proportions of her body are not shown in the illumination as her body is swathed in heavy, jewel-encrusted formal robes concealing it from view. The garments of emperor and empress are made out of the same splendid gold-threaded blue silk, although cut differently; the emperor's robe has a baggy sleeve with a tight cuff, while the empress's dress sports long, wide sleeves; over this they wear golden *loroi* studded with pearls and red and blue gemstones draped around their bodies in distinct ways according to the eleventh century custom of distinguishing the male and female versions of the *loros*. Although Anna Komnena does not actually describe the features of the body of the empress beyond praising its harmonious proportions and overall beauty, her allusions to Pheidias and Apelles, together with the exclamation that she was in fact a "living work of art" conjure up a mental image of a beautiful bodied classical statue, while the statement that Maria appeared as an earthly embodiment of Love also invokes physicality and erotic potential. Yet the visual representation of Maria in the Coislin 79 shows her body nearly completely swallowed up by imperial garments, although it presents an emphatically symmetrical and upright figure with an ideal oval face visually expressing the notion of perfect harmony. Nevertheless the physical beauty of her body and its erotic appeal and power upon the beholder is not communicated through the image.

As the passage from Anna Komnena demonstrates, beauty remains a topos in descriptions of empresses of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, yet now the texts convey more specific details about what constitutes the beauty of the empress — in the case of Maria, it is white skin, red hair, blue eyes, emphatically arched eyebrows, tall stature, harmonious proportions, and statuesque beauty. Maria of Alania's description fits into a very consistent and no doubt highly idealized image of the Byzantine empress of the

eleventh and twelfth centuries, as revealed by the descriptions of other empresses of the same period.[31] Garland summarizes the canon of beauty applied to Byzantine empresses as follows:

> . . . the shape of the face should, for preference, be oval; eyes should be impressive, and indicative of majesty and dignity, light blue being the most suitable color, set well apart; eyebrows should be arched and a marked feature of the expression; the nose, if mentioned, should be close to aquiline; the skin should be white and unflawed, with the cheeks rosy red; and the most popular color of hair was blond or red-gold. Symmetry of limbs and body, and a figure proportionately balanced, was essential for a Byzantine beauty, and she should be of medium height or taller with an upright stance. . . . With these attributes went the need for a dignified carriage and the ability to maintain regal immobility. . . .[32]

Garland concluded that the emphasis placed on the physical beauty and splendor of appearance of imperial women of the eleventh and twelfth centuries directly and exclusively reflects their ceremonial role in the court: "The empress' role is thus very much one, consisting primarily of displaying herself to the populace and court. But while empresses are supposed to participate in ceremonial receptions and be part of the traditional stage-setting, her involvement must remain within bounds."[33] Garland's conclusion that the emphasis on the beauty of empresses reflects their ceremonial importance is correct, however, it would be a mistake to take these texts only at face value and accept that the exclusive role of the empress was her ceremonial display.

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[31] The ideal beauty of the empress, on the other hand, corresponds clearly with the ideal beauty of women in the same period, as revealed by the extensive description of the beauty of Psellos's daughter, Styliane in the funeral oration devoted to her memory. This text provides one of the most extensive and detailed descriptions of the appearance of an individual that comes down to us from the middle Byzantine period, extolling every part of her body from head to toe. See Konstantinos N. Sathas, *Mesaioneke bibliotheke* (Venezia, Paris: 1872-1894), V, p. 62-87; for English translation and analysis, see Michael J. Kyriakis, "Medieval European Society as Seen in Two Eleventh-Century Texts of Michael Psellos," *Byzantine Studies/Etudes Byzantines* 3-4 (1976-1977): pp. 77-100, 67-80, 57-88, especially pp. 78-99.

[32] Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," p. 297. In this period it is even possible to gauge with greater clarity to what degree the verbal praises were completely stock phrases and to what degree they may have reflected the actual appearance of the imperial women, as Garland has shown, ibid. For a summary of the ideal beauty of Komnenian empresses, see Hill, "The Ideal Imperial Komnenian Woman," pp. 8-11. Also see, for example, the descriptions of Zoe in Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book Six, 6-8, p. 158 and of Irene, mother of Anna Komnena in Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* , Book Three, III, p. 110.

[33] Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," p. 307.

Beauty was an accepted way to talk about the empress as it was firmly established by tradition.

The emergence of the bride show motif and the emphasis on the beauty of empresses may be a consequence of the dearth of theoretical thinking about the role of the empress. Byzantine political theory has not developed a positive discourse about women who gained power, and their role in power alliances. Rather, Byzantine writers felt awkward when talking about women who wielded political power,[34] although they were more willing to discuss women's role in religion and sanctity, different but significant domains of power and influence.[35] Yet even in discussions about female religiosity and sanctity the vocabulary was often lacking to describe the female experience, and it was frequently presented in terms of women adopting male patterns of behavior.[36] Beauty, which usually implied both physical and moral beauty, was a

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[34] See for instance the remarks of Pauline Allen, "Contemporary Portrayals of the Byzantine Empress Theodora (A.D. 527-548)," in *Stereotypes of Women in Power. Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, ed. Barbara Garlick, Suzanne Dixon, and Pauline Allen, *Contributions in Women's Studies 125* (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 93-103 regarding the empress Theodora of the sixth century, also see Anne McClanan's analysis of Prokopios's "political pornography" in connection with Theodora, Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses*, *The New Middle Ages* (New York: 2002), pp. 107-120. For a list of sources that level criticism against powerful women of the middle and late Byzantine periods, see Garland, "The Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Furher Note on Conventions of Behaviour and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources," pp. 375, no. 50. For Psellos's negative remarks about the reign of Zoe and Theodora, see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , VI, 5, p. 157. He also notes that "The affairs of the State urgently demanded vigorous and skillful direction, and the country needed a man's supervision – a man at once strong handed and very experienced in government, one who not only understood the present situation, but also any mistakes that had been made in the past, with their probable results." Ibid., VI, 9-11, p. 159. Also see how Anna Komnena describes her grandmother, Anna Dalassena's role in the exercise of political power as reluctant in Alexiad, III, 6 complying with the widely held expectation, that women should not exercise political power, see Komnene, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena* , p. 116.

[35] Women had a significant role in these two realms, yet even here they were greatly outnumbered by men. Kazhdan and Talbot analyzed the role of women during the age of Iconoclasm and noted the relatively small number of female saints, eight altogether, recorded in the tenth century *Synaxarium of Constantinople*, which they attributed to the general "anti-feminist position" of Iconoclast rulers. Alexander P. Kazhdan and Alice-Mary Talbot, "Women and Iconoclasm," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (1991-92): pp. 393-408, especially pp. 392-393. These statistics, however, fit into the larger pattern of sanctification in Byzantium, analyzed by Paul Halsall, who noted the drastic decline in numbers of new female saints between the seventh and fifteenth centuries, see Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 5-9.

[36] See for instance the discussion of Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 192-205. Even when empresses were praised for their endeavors, like Irene the Athenian in the *Vita of Nikephoros*, her accomplishments were cast in male vocabulary: ". . . lion-hearted, god-fearing woman, if woman is the right name for one who surpassed men in the piety of her character." see C. de Boor, *Ignatii Diaconi Vita Nicephori* (Leipzig: 1880), p. 146, 9-11, translated by J. A. Arvites, "Woman Emperor of Constantinople, Her Life and Times" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Missisipi, 1979), p. 51;

convenient topos to draw on in the representations of empresses, for it was an attribute of the ideal emperor and of saints, and beauty was thought to be of primary importance for a bride-to-be. For instance, Thomais of Lesbos is praised in her vita as a woman ". . . who exceedingly surpassed all Lesbian women in her beauty and greatness. She was adorned with bodily graces, whom all the virtues bedecked. The nature of her body was equal to that of the incorporeal powers."[37] St. Mary the Younger (who died ca. 903) was praised in a similar manner: "a virgin most beautiful both in appearance and in soul, so that her inner beauty is reflected in the beauty of her body."[38] The notion, that physical perfection was a direct expression of an inner, spiritual beauty was even more explicitly articulated in the vita of the tenth century saint, Thomais of Lesbos as follows: "She disclosed her hidden beauty by its external manifestation and revealed the grace of her soul by her bodily features; revealing her invisible virtues by the visible, her internal virtues by her external beauty. One could see in her a perfect bodily harmony, which suggested the spiritual beauty of her soul."[39]

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similar statements characterize for example Matrona of Pege and Makrina, see Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 197 no. 50, 198.

[37] *Life of Thomais*, ch. 2, for the Greek original and translation, see Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 401-402. Also see Halsall's translation in Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 297. For the beauty of saints as a common attribute, see Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 31; Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," p. 204.

[38] *Life of Mary the Younger*, ch. 2; for the English translation of Angeliki Laiou, see Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 256, for a discussion of the date of the vita, which has been variously ascribed to the early tenth century and after 1025, see ibid., pp. 242-245. Also see *Life of Irene of Chrysobalaton*, ch. 3: "a woman renowned for moral grace and corporeal beauty alike", for the Greek original and English translation, see Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* , 9; *Life of Theodora of Thessalonika*, ch. 4: ". . . she was praised and admired for the beauty of her body, her pretty face, and her inherent modesty and piety," for English translation, see Talbot's translation in Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 167; Theodora lived in the ninth century (812-894), and her vita was composed two years after her death, see ibid., p. 160. Also see Saint Barbara, who is described in her vita as "exceedingly fair of face, and extraordinary for her beauty." PG 116, col. 304A, for English translation see Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies* , p. 28, for representations of Barbara, see ibid., figs. 24-25.

[39] *Life of Thomais*, ch. 6, for Greek original and translation, see Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," pp. 414-415. For further examples for this topos applied to both male and female saints, see ibid no. 63. Intellectuals, such as Psellos also accepted this notion, as reflected by the following statement about his father: "If one were to judge from his features he would not be wrong in saying that he had a goodness of heart. . ." from the funeral oration of his mother quoted by Kyriakis, "Medieval European Society as Seen in Two Eleventh-Century Texts of Michael Psellos," p. 79.

Emperors were also extolled in Byzantine texts for their beauty.[40] The patriarch Photios (858-867, 877-886) urged the king of the Bulgarians, Boris I to aspire to an orderly, harmonious, and balanced physical appearance, as in his view such exterior and comportment reflect the ruler's wisdom. Although he does not state that these qualities are considered beautiful, other texts clearly attest that these notions formed the core of the Byzantine ideal of beauty. Photios advised:

> Do not neglect, as if they were of no account, the things that pertain to the body and its attitudes and movements; for the best sort of order and system in these things has proved itself in experience to be not the least part of wisdom. . . . Wherefore a prince ought to appear orderly and stately in the look of his face, the care of his hair, and the wearing of his clothes (being neither foppish nor slovenly). . . . An orderly gait becomes the prince: (he must neither mince like a woman nor lurch along in disorderly and irregular fashion).[41]

Individual emperors were also praised with frequency for their appearance. For instance, Eusebius exclaimed about Constantine the Great: "No one was comparable to him for grace and beauty of person or height of stature."[42] And we hear that Leo VI: ". . . was a youth in full bloom and mature and he shined forth with purity and beauty. . . "[43] while about his son, Constantine VII we learn that: "Constantine Porphyrogenitos was tall in stature. His skin was milky white; his eyes were blue and genial. He had an aquiline

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[40] Although Kazhdan and Constable noted: ". . . physical vigor, beauty, and even reason were not accepted as actual virtues in Byzantium until at least the end of the tenth century." See Alexander P. Kazhdan and Giles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), p. 107.

[41] *Letter of Photios to Boris I*, PG CII 627-96; passage translated in Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 113. Yet it is worth noting, that Photios's contemporary, the emperor Basil I warns in the *Hortatory Chapters XXV B-C* against placing high value on beautiful appearance: "Do not brag about the nobility of the body, not be scornful of humbleness; neither honor beauty nor turn aside from ugliness, but look at the beauty of the soul and be loving of the soul. . . . Do not respect and admit those who are noble by dint of their body, but those who are dear by dint of their spirit." Translated in Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, London, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 111.

[42] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, I, 19, see Friedhelm Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (Berlin: 1975); for English translation of the passage, see Constance Head, "Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing," *Byzantion* 50 (1980): pp. 226-40, especially p. 226. Head noted that descriptions of the physical appearance of emperors is not available in the surviving textual sources from the mid-seventh through the early ninth century, see Head, "Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing," p. 231.

[43] *Life of Theophano*, ch. 8, Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," , p. 5.

nose, a long face, ruddy cheeks, and a long neck. He stood straight as a cypress tree, and was broad shouldered."[44] His son, Romanos II received the following praise by Symeon Magister: "He was youthful and vigorous of body, with skin the color of wheat, beautiful eyes, a hooked nose, pleasant aspect, sweet speech. He stood straight as a cypress tree and was broad shouldered."[45] While another tenth century emperor is described as: ". . . gathering together all beauties, is himself the greatest beauty of the place. Rather [the emperor] is a beauty to the beauties in the place, a light to the lights, a delight of delights."[46] About the appearance of the emperor Basil II Psellos reports in greater detail:

> As for his personal appearance, it betrayed the natural nobility of the man, for his eyes were light-blue and fiery, the eyebrows not overhanging nor sullen, nor yet extended in one straight line, like a woman's, but well-arched and indicative of his pride. The eyes were neither deep-set (a sing of knavishness and cunning) nor yet too prominent (a sing of frivolity), but they shown with a brilliance that was manly. His whole face was rounded off, as if from the center into a perfect circle, and joined to his shoulders by a neck that was firm and not too long. His chest was neither thrust out in front of him, nor hanging on him, so to speak, nor again was it concave and, as it were, cramped; rather was it the mean between two extremes, and the rest of his body was in harmony with it. As for height, he was of less than normal stature, but it was proportionate to the separate parts of his body, and he held himself upright.[47]

Even these few examples indicate the importance placed on the physical beauty of the emperor in Byzantine thought, and a clear beauty ideal emerges through the texts. These ideals of manhood had white skin and ruddy cheeks, blue or exceptionally expressive and charismatic eyes, broad shoulders, straight stature, perfectly harmonious facial features and bodily proportions. The male and female imperial beauty ideals parallel one anther, and the emphasis on the physical beauty of the emperor clearly

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[44] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , Book VI, ch. 54, p. 468; for English translation, see Head, "Physical Descriptions of the Emperors in Byzantine Historical Writing," p. 232. For further references to the appearance of Leo VI and Constantine VII, see the marriage poems in Appendix B, no. 1-3 discussed below.

[45] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Romano Constantini Proph. F., ch. 1, pp. 756-757.

[46] For the text of John Geometres, PG 106, cols 912-915, for English translation, see Henry Maguire, "Imperial Gardens and the Rhetoric of Renewal," in *New Constantines. The Rythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries. Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Variorum, 1994), pp. 181-97, especially p. 190; also see Henry Maguire, "Style and Ideology in Byzantine Imperial Art," *Gesta* 28, no. 2 (1990): pp. 217-31, especially pp. 218-219.

[47] Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book I, 35-37, pp. 48-49.

necessitates a partner matching in appearance. While the emperor and his activities are discussed from many other aspects, the discussion of physical beauty remains one of the primary themes of discourse about empresses.[48]

Laiou noted the importance of beauty for aristocratic marriages in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,[49] and a strong emphasis of the physical beauty of bride and groom also characterizes the fairy tale love story narrated in the Fourth Book of the epic poem, Digenes Akrites dated to ca. 1100 which, however, draws on earlier stories of the ninth and tenth centuries.[50] Beauty and the potential for a good marriage are also frequently linked in the lives of female saints.[51] Clearly, female beauty was considered to be a vital asset for a woman to be able to fulfill her primary social role, marriage.

To discuss the beauty of empresses was safe and desirable, because in itself beauty did not imply power, although it suggested moral authority. Beauty also emphatically circumscribed the chief role of the empress: her splendid presence in the ceremonial life of the court, and thus an emphasis on beauty served to confine her role and influence, at least theoretically, and provided an acceptable discourse sanctioned by tradition to discuss women who achieved outstanding status and power within the Byzantine hierarchy. Moreover, beauty also linked the empresses with notions about proper and ideal womanhood and marriage, with the moral excellence of saints, and with the exalted appearance and charisma of emperors.

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[48] Hill notes, that "beauty, a rejection of vanity, piety, fertility, philantropeia, love for husband and control of family" form the primary themes discussed in relation to empress of the Komnenian dynasty, see Hill, "The Ideal Imperial Komnenian Woman," p. 8.

[49] Angeliki E. Laiou, *Mariage, amour et parentéà Byzance aux XIe-XIIIe siècles*, vol. 7, *Travaux et mémoires monographies* (Paris: Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 1992), pp. 94-96; Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," p. 21. Psellos also expresses the notion that the beauty of his daughter promised an early marriage after he recounted one by one the beautiful features of her body: "It was these attributes of hers [that stirred up hopes in her parents] for the girl's early marriage." See Kyriakis, "Medieval European Society as Seen in Two Eleventh-Century Texts of Michael Psellos," p. 89.

[50] For the Greek text and its English translation, see Elizabeth ed. Jeffreys, *Digenis Akritis. The Gottaferrata and Escorial Versions*, *Cambridge Medieval Classics 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 66-133; John Mavrogordato, *Digenes Akrites* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1999), pp. 66-141. For a discussion of the wedding in the poem, see Michael Angold, "The Wedding of Digenes Akrites: Love and Marriage in Byzantium in the Eleventh and Twelfths Centuries," in *He katimerine zoe sto Vyzantio* (Athens: 1989), pp. 201-15, for the ninth and tenth century sources of the epic poem, see ibid., p. 201.

[51] See for instance the *Life of St. Mary the Younger*, ch. 2 in Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 256; or the *Life of St. Theodora of Thessalonike*, ch. 5, in ibid., pp. 167-168.

Body

The suppression of the female body in favor of an image of imperial splendor, as seen for instance on the representation of Maria of Alania in the Coislin 79 (Fig. 163), results in images of Byzantine empresses as emphatically non-physical and non-sexual beings. It has been suggested that such images of the empress indicate that she is only depicted and described in her so-called public body whose power and prestige would be undermined if mortality or sexuality were to be acknowledged in its representations.[52] Kantorowicz's concept of the "king's two bodies" lies behind this interpretation.[53] As Kantorowicz has shown, the notion of the "king's two bodies" was only fully developed in legal texts of Elizabethan England, yet he traced it back to earlier medieval precedents. According to this view, the king possesses two bodies, a natural body with all its idiosyncrasies and ability to age and die, and the super body or body politic, that is immortal and is devoid of imperfections of any kind, invisible, and cannot be touched.[54] As Kantorowicz has shown, the notion of the "king's two bodies" was only fully developed in legal texts of Elizabethan England, yet he traced it back to earlier medieval precedents. Kantorowicz argued that the use of haloes in representations of Byzantine imperial figures reveals the presence of the concept of the "king's two bodies" in Byzantine political thought, even if it was not verbally articulated by Byzantine writers. He states:

> The halo of the Byzantine emperor, which even in Christian times still referred to the *tyche*, the *genius imperatoris*, referred in later times mainly to the imperial power as such which was considered perpetual and sempiternal and, therewith, venerable and holy also in the Christian sense. . . . It indicated the bearer and executive of perpetual power derived from God and made the emperor the incarnation of some kind of

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[52] Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press: 2001), p. 133; James advanced this position in her study for empresses of the fourth through eighth centuries.
[53] McClanan also applied Kantorowicz's concept to the analysis of early Byzantine empresses, see McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 6, 114, 137.
[54] James's notion of the public body appears to coincide with the super body or body politic of Kantorowicz.

> "prototype" which, being immortal, was *sanctus*, regardless of the personal character, or even the sex, of its constituent.[55]

Kantorowicz suggests that the halo is a visual signifier of a concept of time different from natural terrestrial time — those who wear haloes are transported to a temporal dimension characterized by time never ending.[56] While Kantorowicz's concept is helpful to the understanding of certain aspects of Byzantine imperial portraiture — namely its tendency for typological representation and strong abstraction[57] — it is important to acknowledge that there are several Byzantine practices and ideological threads that undermine Kantorowicz's interpretation, as they reveal a more complex public view of the imperial body, and by extension the body of the empress, than would be allowed within the constraints of the notion the "king's two bodies," as will be shown below. For instance, it is precisely because of her sexual body that the empress is a powerful figure — as mother, wife, or potential bride — she provides the link between successive emperors, since dynastic succession, although not the rule, was the desirable means of transferring power in Byzantium. While the empress's sexuality and fertility for the most part is suppressed in her visual images, it is certainly present in the mental image of the empress in Byzantium.

The abstract representation of the body of Byzantine empresses, as seen in the figure of Maria in Coislin 79 (Fig. 163) is contradictory to the chief role of empresses in the imperial family, namely motherhood and the production of legitimate male heirs to the throne. Even when Byzantine empresses are depicted with their children, the maternal qualities of their bodies are understated and intimate gestures between mother and child are absent. Yet, the fertility of the empress is often acknowledged in texts accompanying images as for example is the case in an illuminated manuscript from c. 880, Paris gr. 510 (Fig. 147).[58] The facing pages depict an imperial family: Basil I, the

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[55] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 80.

[56] He also states: ". . . the halo always indicated, in some way or another, a change of the nature of Time." Ibid. , p. 84.

[57] For a discussion of representations of Byzantine empresses as typological, see McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , p. 2.

[58] See the discussion of this manuscript in Chapter VII. It has been shown, that this manuscript was commissioned by the patriarch Photios (the tutor of Basil's sons) as a gift to the imperial family, see Leslie

founder of the Macedonian dynasty appears on the left flanked by the prophet Elijah handing him the military standard while the archangel Gabriel crowns him.[59] On the right his wife, Eudokia stands with two of their young sons Leo and Alexander. The imperial figures stand in frontal positions staring squarely at the spectator, without any gestures of connection or intimacy between them. They are even dressed in identical purple garments with matching *loroi*, a device that downplays gender differences in favor of emphasizing dynastic unity. The inscription framing Eudokia's page states: "Basil, king of the Romans, elevated you, a well-branched vine bearing as the grapes of sovereignty the serene princes with whom you shine, o light-bringing Eudokia."[60] The empress is compared to a fertile vine plant enunciating as her most important duty the production of heirs for the establishment of Basil's new dynasty, the Macedonian house.[61] Moreover, as Brubaker noted, the epithet light-bringing applied to Eudokia is a term frequently associated with Aphrodite/Venus, thus the notion of sexuality, beauty, and fertility is also conjured up through this verbal link to the ancient goddess of love.[62]

This representation is in contrast with images of Roman empresses where the bond between mother and child is often shown through intimate gestures, and the fertile body of the empress is flaunted and equated with the well-being of the empire. For example, the second century copper coin of Faustina the Younger, wife of Marcus Aurelius shows a profile bust on the obverse with the legend *Faustina augusta* and the

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Brubaker, "The Illustrated Copy of the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus" (Ph. D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1983); Leslie Brubaker, "Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth-Century Byzantium: The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris. (B.N. GR. 510)," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* XXXIX (1985): 1-13; Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology, 6* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[59] The following inscription frames the image of the emperor: "[ ] clearly Elijah records a victory over your enemies, while Gabriel announcing the joy, o Basil, crowns you protector of the world." Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 97-98.

[60] Ibid. , pp. 97-98.

[61] The imperial imagery of Basil's reign aims to justify the means by which he attained power: he assassinated his predecessor, Michael III, who previously elevated him as co-emperor; at that time Basil also married Eudokia, who was said to have been Michael's lover. For the historical circumstances, see Ewald Kislinger, "Eudokia Ingerina, Basileios I, und Michael III," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 33 (1983): pp. 119-36. The image in Paris Gr. 510 draws attention to the obvious fact that Michael failed to produce a child and presented both children as legitimate sons of Basil, despite the probably unfounded rumors that Leo might have been Michael's son.

[62] Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus* , p. 162, no. 74.

empress appears surrounded by her six children, two sons and four daughters on the reverse with the inscription *tempo(rum) felic(itas)*.[63] The empress carries the youngest two on her arms, while the others surround her tugging at her robes (Fig. 181). The image is rendered summarily, yet Faustina's fecund body is clearly revealed through the drapery. The legend makes it clear that the empress mother is represented as a symbol of the happiness of the empire on account of her fertile maternal body, which has given birth to the many imperial offspring. This kind of imagery continued on coins of empresses of the family of Constantine the Great in the fourth century. For instance, on the bronze coin of Helena from ca. 324-6, the bust of the empress is shown on the obverse surrounded by the legend *Flavia Helena Augusta*, while the reverse shows a standing figure holding a baby and handing a ball or globe to another child with the inscription *Pietas Augustae* (Fig. 13). Here, the maternal figure of the personification, which some scholars identify with the empress herself, due to the similarity of hairstyle and attire between the two figures, associates Helena with the piety of the empire.[64] Constantine's wife, Fausta is also depicted with numismatic iconography that showcases her fertile body, as on a gold medallion from ca. 324 where she appears with a child on her lap grasping for her breast in a position similar to nursing, while the personifications of Felicitas and Pietas attend to her enthroned figure (Fig. 14).[65] On a solidus from the same period she is shown standing holding two of her infant sons over her breasts, with the inscription *Salus rei publicae* — health of the state (Fig. 15).[66] Beyond emphasizing the role of empresses in maintaining the health and prosperity of the empire, these coins also indicate the intentions of the emperors regarding imperial succession — they place images of their offspring and their mothers engaged in intimate interactions on the coins in order to stake a claim on future succession. This kind of overt symbolic equation of the fecund maternal body and the health, happiness, and security of the empire does not

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[63] The sestertius dates to 161-176, see John P. C. Kent, Bernhard Overbeck, and Armin U. Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* (Munich: 1973), pl. 82/350, p. 121. For a discussion of the representation of Faustina and her growing number of children on Roman coins, see Klaus Fittschen, *Die Bildnistypen der Faustina minor und die Fecunditas Augustae* (Göttingen: 1982).

[64] Kent, Overbeck, and Stylow, *Die Römische Münze* , pl. 138/649, p. 163; the coin legend on the obverse: *Flavia Maxima Favsta Avgvsta*, on the reverse: *Pietas Avgvstae.*

[65] The coin probably commemorates the birth of the youngest son of Constantine and Fausta, Constans. See Ibid. , pl. 138/644, p. 163.

[66] Ibid. , pl. 138/647, p. 163; the coin legend on the obverse: *Flav Max Favsta Avg.*

continue on coin images of empresses in the later fourth and fifth centuries. Maternal symbolism disappears from the numismatic iconography of Theodosian empresses, and the representation of the female body of the empress also undergoes significant changes that de-emphasize their feminine qualities.

The intimacy and physicality shown on representations of empresses up to the mid-fourth century, was simply not present on images in any medium showing Byzantine empresses with their children.[67] Yet despite the lack of realistic or emphatically physical representation of the maternal body of the empress and the absence of intimate familial bonds between mother and sons in the illumination of Paris Gr. 510 (Fig. 147), the image clearly promotes the establishment of a new dynasty and advocates the interests of designated heirs through the imagery of motherhood. The accompanying text amplifies the message conveyed by visual means and presents the empress as a symbol of the strength, vitality, and stability of the dynasty. Eudokia also appeared as a fecund mother in a lost mosaic of the imperial palace, described in the biography of Basil written by his grandson, Constantine VII, in the tenth century. Above the cornice on the four walls Basil and Eudokia appeared enthroned together in imperial regalia, probably on the wall opposite the entrance, while their sons and daughters were shown in imperial robes and crowns holding books dispersed around the other three walls. The ceiling displayed another image of the imperial family adoring a cross. Inscriptions recorded the thanks to God offered by the parents for their offspring, and the gratitude of the children for the elevation of their father to the throne.[68] The presence of the daughters enhanced Eudokia's status as mother and further emphasized the vitality of the imperial stock. Although the portrait type, figure style and composition of this mosaic can not be ascertained, it is likely that the representation showed the imperial family in hieratic,

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[67] Virtually no informal, genre-like scenes survive representing imperial figures from this period, with the exception of the Madrid Skylitzes and the Vatican gr. 1851 (both dating to the twelfth century), but even here, the intimacy and physicality of the representations is greatly reduced. For the Skylitzes manuscript, see André Grabar and M. Manoussacas, *L'illustration du manuscrit de Skylitzès de la Bibliothéque National de Madrid, Biblitothéque de l'Institut Hellénique d'Études Byzantines et Post-Byzantines de Venise, n. 10* (Venice: 1979); for the Vatican manuscript, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 210-230.

[68] For the *Vita Basilii*, see Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , De Basilio Macedone, ch. 89, pp. 331-335; for English translation, see Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1972), pp. 197-198. For a discussion of this mosaic, see André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: 1936), p. 100.

abstract compositions without much intimacy or interaction between the various figures similarly to other surviving imperial representations from the period.

Clearly there are discrepancies between what is represented visually in effigies of empresses and what may be communicated through texts accompanying the images. While the visual image of the empress maintained an abstract appearance unwilling to present her as a woman with a physical body and sexual potency, in certain contexts Byzantines viewed their empresses in a more physical light. It appears that the "public body" of the empress was in fact a more complex notion than it has been acknowledged. Certain practices and ceremonials attested in textual sources give us a different view of the empress and her body than what may be glimpsed from her representations.

Three poems of Leo Magistros celebrate imperial marriages;[69] two were sung at a nuptial of Leo VI[70] and one at the wedding of his son, Constantine VII in 919.[71] Although the titles of the poems do not reveal when they were performed during the festivities, most likely they were sung in the nuptial chamber, as they celebrate and encourage the physical union between bride and groom. The short, archaizing poems

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[69] For a discussion of marriage poems in general, see R. Kydell, "Epithalamium," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christenum* (Stuttgart), 927-43; Wolfram Hörander, *Theodoros Prodromos, historische Gedichte, Wiener Byzantinische Studien, XI* (Vienna: 1974), pp. 88-89; Herbert Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich: 1978), vol. I, p. 150; George A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 147-149, 175.

[70] Although, it is not clear which marriage is concerned, for Leo had four wives; for Leo's multiple marriages, see R. Guilland, "Les noces plurales a Byzance," *Byzantinoslavica* 9 (1947): pp. 9-30; Romilly J. H. Jenkins, "Three Documents Concerning the "Tetragamy"." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): pp. 229-41. Reprinted: R. J. H. Jenkins, Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries, London, 1970, VIII. Also see Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 133-163. Magdalino speculated that the poems celebrated Leo's fourth marriage, see Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): pp. 97-118, especially p. 99.

[71] See Appendix B, no. 1-3 for the Greek text of the poems. The poems are found in Barberini gr. 310, on f.80v, f.82r, f.86r. For the manuscript see: Paul Canart and Vittorio Peri, *Sussidi bibliograpfici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana, Studi e Testi 261* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1970), 171. They were published by P. Matranga, *Anecdota Graeca* (Rome: 1850) II, pp. 561-565, 568-571 and Theodorus Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* (Leipzig: 1882) III, p. 356-358, 361-362. Paul Magdalino, who studied another poem of the same author in the same manuscript accepted the identification of the author with Leo Choirosphaktes for the first two poems, but noted that it was unlikely that the poem on the wedding of Constantine VII can be attributed to Choirosphaktes, see Paul Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise," in *Maistor. Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning.*, ed. Ann Moffatt, *Byzantina Australiensia 5* (Canberra: 1984), pp. 225-40, especially pp. 225-226. Also see Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," pp. 98-99, where he suggests that the manuscript containing the poems may have been commissioned by Constantine VII.

provide no information about the families and origins of bride and groom, as is customary in marriage pomes (*epithalamia* or *gamelia*) and as is recommended by the late antique treatises of Menander and Pseudo-Dionysius, or demonstrated by the work of the twelfth century poet, Theodore Prodromos.[72] While they include some brief mythological references — e.g. to Penelope, the ideal and faithful wife —[73] they do not use extensive mythological comparisons in the manner of ancient and early Byzantine marriage poetry.[74] They include exhortations to the citizens and courtiers to celebrate the marriage by dancing and singing,[75] extol the role of the poet in celebrating the couple,[76] give a brief description of the bridal chamber,[77] and provide an account of the bride and groom and their union. The focus of the poems clearly is the celebration and encouragement of the bodily union of bride and groom, and they most likely are so-called bedroom speeches (*kateunastikos*), about which Menander declares: "the bedroom speech is an exhortation to intercourse."[78] Therefore, these poems were most likely performed in the nuptial chamber of the imperial couple, and they probably were part of a series of speeches and poems pronounced at the various stages of the marriage festivities.

All poems employ formulaic imagery, yet reveal interest in some of the physical attributes of the bodies of the bride and groom and their sexual union. The girls' beauty and attraction is praised as: "very divine girl … with graceful eyelids"[79] or as "queen, a

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[72] See for instance the recommendations of Menander on praising the parents and family of the bridal couple, II 402,21-403,25, or Pseudo-Dionysius's suggestions about the same topic II, 265, in D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford: Calderon Press, 1981), pp. 140-143, 367-368. Also see Prodromos' speeches on imperial marriages of the mid-twelfth century, Hörander, *Theodoros Prodromos, historische Gedichte* , XIII, XIV, XLIIIa, pp. 265-266, 268-270, 399-400.

[73] Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* , p. 356, 2/53.

[74] For ancient and late antique marriage speeches, see the works of Menander Rhetor and Pseudo-Dionysius in Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* , Treatise II/VI-VII, pp. 135-159; II, pp. 365-368, IV, pp. 370-371, which recommend the use of extensive mythological allusions. For an example of a marriage poem rich in mythological imagery, see Claudian's *Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria*, Claudius Claudianus, *Claudian, with an English Translation by Maurice Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library* (London New York: 1922), pp. 240-267.

[75] Appendix B: 1, 5-6; 1, 28; 1, 65-66; 2, 1-3; 3, 13-18; 3, 25-26;

[76] Appendix B: 1, 1-4; 1, 9-12; 1, 24-29; 1, 31-32; 1, 37-39; 1, 49-52; 2, 31-34; 3, 3-12; 3, 15-18; 3, 21-24; 3, 43-44.

[77] "laurel bearing, rose garlanded bridal chamber", 2, 11-12, same passage is also found in 3, 5-6. "house with the golden bedchamber", 3, 7-8; "silver bridal chamber," in 3, 24. "cunningly built bridal chamber," 5, 7-8. "laurel bearing, rose garlanded silver bridal chamber," 5, 37-38, see Appendix B, no. 1-3.

[78] Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* , p. 146/23-24.

[79] Appendix B: 2, 9-10.

child of blessed folk you have the beauty of the Graces."[80] Such expressions as "dewy girl,"[81] "light-bearing" bride,[82] "gentle-hearted spring, beautiful dawn,"[83] and "rosy-fingered child"[84] emphasize innocence and youth. The maidens are also characterized through tone of voice as "sweet voiced."[85] Greater attention is lavished on describing skin, complexion, and hair as we hear about the "sweet haired, rosy complexioned, golden flower,"[86] or the girl with "shining fair skin with a flower of complexion, bright with a pearly bloom of body,"[87] or the "golden flower with sweet hair and rosy complexion,"[88] and the "child with blond-hair and the breath of flowers."[89] Similar expressions characterize the grooms as "rosy, charming, lily-white skinned, blossoming bridegroom" or "blooming, rosy, lovely, lily-white skinned bridegroom"[90] who are also likened to the Sun god in his chariot.[91] The emphasis is clearly on illuminating brilliance, freshness and youth, and the latter also conjures up notions of virginal purity through references to the fair and rosy skinned bodies, creating the impression of untainted innocence. After all, we should remember that imperial children married at an early age, for instance Leo was sixteen when he first married, Constantine not quite fourteen.[92] There is, however, no attempt to describe the facial features, the

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[80] Appendix B: 1, 67-68; 3, 63-64.
[81] Appendix B: 1, 3; 2,4;
[82] Appendix B: 1, 23; 2, 29;
[83] Appendix B: 1, 41.
[84] Appendix B: 1, 58.
[85] Appendix B: 1, 17; 2, 11; 3, 49.
[86] Appendix B: 3, 1-2;
[87] Appendix B: 1, 29-30.
[88] Appendix B: 3, 1.
[89] Appendix B: 3, 61.
[90] Appendix B: 1, 35-36; 3, 67-68. For a description of the emperor's body beautiful, shining forth with light, see Averil Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: 1976), Book II, 90-105, p. 96.
[91] Appendix B: 1, 23; 3, 43. The comparison of the emperor to the sun is a topos frequently found in imperial panegyrics, see Gyula Moravcsik, "Niketas Akominatos lakodalmi költeménye (A Marriage Poem of Niketas Choniates)," *Egyetemes philológiai közlöny* XLVII (1923): pp. 79-87, especially p. 85. The emperor is presented as the sun for example in Corippus' panegyric to Justin II, see Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* , Book II, 145-150, p. 97.
[92] The Code of Justinian established the minimum age for marriage as twelve for women and fourteen for men, see John Meyendorff, "Chrisitian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990): pp. 99-107, especially p. 103. However, it must be kept in mind, that it is unclear which marriage of Leo is celebrated in the first two poems. But even if the surviving poems celebrate his third or fourth marriage, it is likely that similar texts celebrated his first marriage, as the textual similarity between the poems celebrating Leo's marriage and Constantine's nuptial suggest that these texts were reused with minor modifications.

overall bodily proportions, or the specific garments worn for the occasions, despite the many references to outward appearance.[93]

All three poems emphasize love and desire, and the poet presents the songs as the instruments of stimulating desire when he pleas: "Girl with the sweet voice, golden shoot, receive the songs of the cymbal. Learn how desire is desired, learn how love is loved..."[94] Although the language has a distinctly sensual and erotic quality, there is also strong emphasis on the lawful offspring wished of the unions: "[Girl], take a rose in your hands and bring it to your marriage bed where Eros will rule with lawful desires,"[95] and "Eros draws the bow and Desire unites natures and grants the favor of flower buds of the rosy fingered child."[96] The birth of children is promised in the following strophe too: "Leo, embrace the rosy body of your consort and fall victim to the dart of desire. Harvest the ripe bosom as apples. [Leo, you bright] Sun, may your light-bringing spouse bear luminous, crowned children."[97] It is clear from these verses that the physical beauty and erotic appeal, as well as the bodily union of the emperor and empress was publicly celebrated and promoted, and this physical union was the focus of the poems.[98] While mention is made of the groom's handsome appearance and splendor, it is through the more extensive description and praise of the bride's sensual body and its sexuality that the matrimonial union is articulated, and the future of the empire is ensured. The text of

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[93] We only hear that the brides wore flowing robes, see Appendix B: 1, 11-12; 2, 5-6.
[94] Appendix B: 1, 17-20.
[95] Appendix B: 1, 43-46.
[96] Appendix B: 1, 55-58.
[97] Appendix B: 2, 25-30.
[98] That imperial marriages were highly publicized events is known from many Byzantine sources. For instance, the Life of Theophano describes her wedding to Leo VI (his first wedding) in the late ninth century: "Little time has passed, a banquet was organized for the wedding, and the nuptial chamber was decorated with garlands, and the holy matrimony [was marked by] crowning, and a very expensive feast and gifts to the subjects were supplied, and feeding the poor and beneficence throughout the whole city was provided in abundance; the condemned people were freed and the prisoners of war were let go, joy and glory and valor was given to all the assembly to satisfy all, the young of the seven hills of Constantinople crowned with wreaths of flower were joyfully singing hymns to the emperor, the whole city and the country was singing in harmony. . . ", see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," ch. 11/25-32, p. 6. For a discussion about imperial marriage ceremonies in the *Book of Ceremonies,* see above Chapter I. Non-imperial marriages were also public affairs, as we learn from the narrative of the marriage the fairy tale hero, Digenes Akrites which reflects actual customs of the Byzantine aristocracy; see Jeffreys, *Digenis Akritis. The Gottaferrata and Escorial Versions* , Book 4, pp. 66-134. For Byzantine marriage customs, also see Fotios K. Litsas, *The Greek Folk Wedding: Preliminary Studies* (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 1981), pp. 19-21; Alicia Walker, "Marriage. Wife and Husband: "A Golden Team"," in *Byzantine Women and Their World,* ed. Ioli Kalavrezou (Cambridge, New Haven, London: 2003), pp. 214-21.

these poem focuses solely on the anticipated intercourse of the young imperial couples, simply not mentioning other themes recommended by Menander and Pseudo-Dionysius for this type of speech.[99] One wonders whether the single focus on the physical union and its anticipated results, the birth of imperial heirs was driven by the growing importance of dynastic ideology, a driving force of the Macedonian world view, and by the increased significance of the status of the institution of marriage, which became a sacrament in the tenth century.[100]

The fertility of the empress' body, or more precisely lack thereof, on occasion could even become the butt of courtly jest. Psellos reported the following anecdote about the elderly imperial sisters, Zoe and Theodora:

> Indulging all kinds of silly talk, he [the jester] maintained he had been born of the elder sister [Zoe]. Further than that, he swore most solemnly that the younger sister, too, had given birth to a child. His own birth, he said, had taken place thus — and then, as if recalling how he had been brought into the world, he gave a description of her labor, with shameless details. His most witty anecdotes, however, concerned Theodora's *accouchment*, the conversations she had during the pregnancy, and the manner of delivery. These foolish women, captivated by the clown's stories, allowed him to come and go as he pleased by secret doors.[101]

It is difficult to judge the credibility of the story despite Psellos's emphatic assertions about the truthfulness and accuracy of his chronicle, and one wonders if he made up the

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[99] Pseudo-Dionysius suggests: "Adduce next the argument that marriage is necessary for human beings. . . . Then pass on to the personalities of the two who are coming together in marriage. In this section you will speak of their origin and upbringing, physical beauty and age, advantages of fortune, accomplishments, personal eagerness for the wedding and the union, the attitude of friends, strangers, and the whole city as a community. . . . After the praises and encomia, let there be an exhortation to the married couple, to be fond of one another and live in concord as far as possible." Pseudo-Dionysius, IV, 270-271 in Russell and Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* , p. 370. For Menander's speech, see Treatise II, VII ibid., pp. 147-159, and commentary pp. 317-323.

[100] Novel 89 of Leo VI stated: "We order that marital cohabitation be sanctioned by the witness of the sacred blessing," see Meyendorff, "Chrisitian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," , p. 105. For Greek original, see P. Noailles and A. Dain, *Les Novelles de Léon VI le Sage* (Paris: 1944), p. 297. Also see Angeliki Laiou, "Consensus Facit Nupitas - Et Non. Pope Nicholas I's Responsa to the Bulgarians as a Source for Byzantine Marriage Customs," *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 4 (1985): pp. 189-201, especially p. 196. Unfortunately, the lack of other marriage poems from the same period preclude a comparative analysis of their themes and emphases. Magdalino speculated that the genre of anacreontic poetry, to which these marriage songs belong, may have survived during the period of Iconoclasm, see Magdalino, "The Bath of Leo the Wise and the 'Macedonian Renaissance' Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology," p. 98.

[101] Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book Six, ch. 144-145, p. 231.

antics of the jester to convince his readers about the foolishness of the two empresses.[102] The story pokes fun at the two empresses neither of whom ever bore a child, Zoe on account of her advanced age at the time of her first marriage in 1028, and Theodora due to her monastic vow of virginity. The anecdote has impact because it was preposterous on several accounts: how could a lowly, speech impaired jester be the offspring of an empress born in the purple; and how could he be the child of elderly, barren, or virgin empresses, who have never experienced childbirth? As pregnancy and childbirth were fundamental and expected roles of Byzantine empresses, the anecdote highlights the sisters' obvious inability to fulfill fundamental roles of the Byzantine empress, therefore it might be argued that the story's sole purpose is to serve as invective against the empresses. Yet it is also conceivable, that the story was not the figment of Psellos's imagination but an actual event that took place at the court; it is possible that the empresses found this pantomime particularly amusing from their vantage point of possessing unique power — they ascended the throne despite their inability to produce offspring on account of their blood and lineage. The story reveals lack of shame and openness in discussing bodily functions of the empresses with further implications of age, infertility, and infirmity of the imperial house.

Infirmity of the imperial female body was also publicly acknowledged in other forms. The lost mosaic commissioned by the empress Irene and her son Constantine VI was set up to commemorate the healing of the empress from a serious affliction of hemorrhage: "She also ordered that, as a lasting memorial, their portraits should be executed in mosaic . . . handing over the offerings that have been enumerated so as both to express their faith and to proclaim for all time the miracle [of the healing] of the hemorrhage through the setting up [of the portraits] and the offerings of the gifts."[103] The

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[102] The anecdote cited here follows other anecdotes about the jester that present his relationship with the emperor, and the emperor's gullibility and the jester's skills at manipulation, see ibid. , ch. 141-143, pp. 229-230; Psellos asserts his belief in writing impartial, accurate history in Book Six, ch. 23-25, pp. 166-168. For a discussion of Psellos's historical method, see Gary J. Johnson, "Constantine VIII and Michael Psellos. Rhetoric, Reality, and the Decline of Byzantium, A.D. 1025-28," *Byzantine Studies* 9, no. 2 (1982): pp. 220-32; C. Chamberlain, "Imperial Panegyric in Michael Psellus," *Byzantion* LVI (1986): pp. 16-27.

[103] "De sascris aedibus deque miraculis Deiparae ad Fontem," in *Acta Sanctorum Novembris III* (1910), 878-89, especially p. 880, for translation see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , pp. 156-157.

text implies that an inscription commemorating the miraculous cure of Irene's blood flow was incorporated into the mosaic explicitly memorializing the empress's illness and cure. The commission of such a mosaic fits into the larger social pattern of offering votive gifts at a shrine after successful faith healing.[104] As I suggested in Chapter IV, the uniquely feminine infirmity of Irene's body and its cure through the help of the Virgin served as a means of legitimizing the regent empress's power in the late eighth century.

Imperial ceremonials also incorporated references to the transitory quality of human and imperial life and frailness of body. Harun ibn-Yahya, an Arabic prisoner in Constantinople witnessed and described the following incident of an imperial procession leading from the Great Palace to Hagia Sophia on Ash Wednesday during the reign of Leo VI in 912:

> In the hand of the Emperor there is a small golden box in which is a bit of earth. He goes on foot. Whenever he makes two paces, the minister says in their own language: "*Memnesthe tou thanatou*," which means in translation, "Remember the death!" When (the minister) says this to him, the Emperor pauses, opens the box, looks at the earth, kisses it, and weeps. He proceeds in this way until he reaches the gate of the Church.[105]

During this public ceremonial the emperor acknowledged his own mortality, showed humility, and exhibited strong emotions in front of the eyes of his subjects. A piece of imperial insignia, the *akakia* (a small silk sack containing dirt held in the left hand of the emperor)[106] was invested with a meaning similar to the golden box containing dirt

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[104] For a discussion of medicine and miraculous cures in early Byzantium, see Gary Vikan, "Art, Medicine, & Magic," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 65-86; for faith healing in the late Byzantine period, see Alice-Mary Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium*, ed. N. M. Vaporis, vol. 8, *The Archbishop Iakokvos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources* (Brookline, MA: 1983); for women's health in Byzantium, see Molly Fulghum Heintz, "Magic, Medicine, and Prayer," in *Byzantine Women and their World*, ed. Ioli Kalavrezou (Cambride, New Haven, London: Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 275-81.

[105] Translation from, A. Vasiliev, "Harun ibn-Yahya and his Description of Constantinople," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 5 (1932): pp. 158f; also see, Albrecht Berger, "Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople," in *Byzantine Constantinople. Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoglu (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2001), pp. 73-87, especially p. 78. For the identification of the emperor described in the passage, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , p. 223, no. 40, with further bibliography.

[106] Scholars believe that the *akakia* originated in the consular *mappa*; for a discussion of this transition, see Jean Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* (Paris: 1966), p. 201, no. 2; and Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, (Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Washington D.C.: 1968), II/1, pp. 86-87.

possibly as early as ca. 900, but certainly by the fourteenth century.[107] The fourteenth century treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos mentions a silk sack in the shape of a scroll containing dirt fastened by a kerchief, "the dirt, that we call *akakia*, symbolizes that the emperor is humble as much as a mortal, and that the majesty of royalty must not be made vain and proud, the kerchief symbolizes instability of that which passes from one to another..."[108] Even if the *akakia* acquired its meaning as a vanitas symbol only in the late Byzantine period, the passage from ibn-Yahya's pen underscores that the imperial office included a public ceremonial acknowledgement of the emperor's mortality in the middle Byzantine era.

Visual representations of Byzantine empresses (and emperors) may differ greatly in their appearance and aesthetics than one might expect after considering such texts and customs. They are highly formal effigies, lacking pictorial devices that would link them with the realm of the everyday or the literal. These reticent images were not intended to be looked at in isolation, but functioned as an integral part of a wider social and cultural context engendered by ceremonials, festivals, acclamations, and orations which activated and particularized the effigies and supplied them with meaning.

Garment

Despite the preoccupation with the physical beauty of empresses, apparent in their visual and literary representations, in images the physical features of their bodies are

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[107] For discussions of the *akakia* (also called *anexikakia*), see Otto Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung in höfischen Zeremoniell*, 2 ed. (Darmstadt: 1956), p. 148; Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , II/1, pp. 86-87; Philip Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1973), III/1, pp. 133-134; ODB I, p. 42; Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 33. The *Kletorologion of Philotheos* from 899 mentions that the emperor held something ("ten exanastasin tes choikes hemon, ousias") in his left hand, translated as "the symbol of the resurrection of our earthly nature" by Oikonomides, who also suggested that this object was the *akakia*, see Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* (Paris: 1972), p. 201.13-16. The *Book of Ceremonies* mentions the *akakia* several times, and suggests that it symbolizes Christ's teachings and commandments Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske (Bonn: 1829), I/1 p. 25, I/9, p. 62, I/37, p. 187, II/40, p. 638.

[108] Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* , pp. 201/12-202/3. Similar ideas were also expressed by Symeon of Thessalonike, *De Sacro templo*, ch. 148, PG 155:356A-B.

replaced by elaborate imperial garments, which are similar and in many cases identical with those worn by emperors.[109] Garments, as extensions of the body, were an important signifier of social relationships and meaning in Byzantium, and dress was an essential element in constructing imperial identity in public.[110]

The function of garments in constituting public imperial identity is revealed in texts that give an account of the transformation of non-imperial figures into imperial ones. For example, imperial brides were dressed into imperial garments even before their engagement or marriage had taken place, before they partook in any ceremony that conferred imperial status on them, as we learn from the tenth century text of the *Life of Theophano*, and from the twelfth century illuminated *epithalamion* (more correctly termed *eisiterioi*) celebrating the arrival of a western bride to Constantinople. The *Life of Theophano* relates that after Theophano was selected in a bride show, she was immediately adorned with imperial garments before she was introduced to the emperor and his son: "Examining them [i.e. the three final candidates] in a bath and finding that the saint by far surpassed the other two in beauty, she dressed her in imperial garments (*basilikois amphiasmasin*), took her by the right hand and went in to her husband the Emperor Basil. Throwing her at his feet, she proclaimed her a worthy bride for their son."[111] The *eisiterioi* recounts that the emperor first sent out a close female relative to greet the new arrival:

> . . . he sent all his female relatives up to seventy or more, I think, all shoots of Caesars and *sebastokrators*, of crown wearing despots, of those dressed in the purple. And one from the selected ones, in whom he had more trust, the king gave the responsibility to rush to you before all the others, that she alone would see you, justified by the closer kinship, and would dress you in the Roman mantle of the queen

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[109] This is not a new phenomenon as it began with Theodosian empresses, see for example the coins of Theodosia empresses in Chapter III. For a contrary view, see Jennifer L. Ball, "Byzantine Dress" (Ph. D. dissertation, New York University, 2001), pp. 15-57.

[110] A notable exception is an image of the twelfth century emperor Andronikos Komnenos in peasant dress described by Niketas Choniates, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , pp. 234-235. For an analysis of this text and image, see Antony D. Eastmond, "An Intentional Error? Imperial Art and Misinterpretation under Andronikos I Komnenos," *Art Bulletin* 76 (1994): pp. 502-10.

[111] Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," ch. 10/15-20, p. 6. For English translation, see Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" p. 185.

> (*Romanikon despoinikon himation*) and would decorate you with all the other insignia as Augusta. And thus all the others could see you and respectfully greet you.[112]

A full-page miniature accompanies this part of the poem, showing the arrival of the bride to a port of Constantinople, her makeover into a Byzantine princess, and her greeting by ladies in waiting (Fig. 1). A fourteenth century treatise on court ceremonials from Pseudo-Kodinos also describes similar procedures.[113] These occasions transformed a Byzantine or a foreign maiden into the mould of the Byzantine empress. The transformation eradicated traces of foreignness or commonness. The bride, regardless of her origin, was displayed to the subjects in a visual idiom that was familiar and fully controlled by the court, since the ceremonial articulated the arrival, acceptance, and assimilation of a new member of the imperial family, whose identity subsequently was to be defined solely through her role within the imperial hierarchy and tradition. Moreover, the metamorphosis of the bride into an imperial woman before the nuptials also advocates visually that the imperial heir is about to marry a woman of commensurate social standing. Clearly, the clothes make the empress.

That Byzantine imperial identity was tightly interwoven, at least in the popular imagination, with the significance of imperial garments and splendor, is also illustrated by the anecdote told about the emperor Leo VI by the tenth century Western ambassador Liutprand. The story shows that the lack of the emperor's clothes could lead to the erasure of his identity. We hear that Leo VI snuck out of the palace alone and in disguise to check the vigilance of his night guards, and was arrested by a watchful sentinel. In vain Leo attempted to convince his captor that he was the emperor as the guard explained that he had only seen the emperor a few times, and even then at a distance:

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[112] See f.3r of Vatican gr. 1851. For the Greek text, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 220-227, for a German translation see J. Strzygowski, "Das Epithalamion des Paläologen Andronikos II. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Ceremonialbildes," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10 (1901): pp. 546-67. Also, see Michael Jeffreys, "The Vernacular eisiterioi for Agnes of France," in *Byzantine Papers, Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, and Ann Moffatt, *Byzantian Australiensia 1* (Canberra: 1978), pp. 101-15

[113] Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos: Traité des offices* , ch. 12, pp. 286-287. This text also ascribes importance to female courtiers in receiving and preparing the foreign bride. After the emperor and his son greet the young lady at her port of entry, women of the court dress the bride into scarlet slippers and imperial robes and lead her on horseback to the palace for the marriage ceremony.

> Certainly I have gazed at a distance once or twice, when he has appeared in public, but I could not get close, and it seemed to me then that I was looking at a wonder of nature rather than at a human being. . . . Fortune is not as kind to you as it is to him: you lie in prison, he sits upon his golden throne. . . . Do you expect me to believe that you are the emperor, a dirty rogue like you who squanders his substance with loose women.[114]

The guard's perception of the emperor was shaped by his experiences of imperial ceremonials as distant, remote spectacles, and he could only conceive of the emperor as an inaccessible figure of splendor swathed in gold and purple lacking actual human features. The anecdote suggests that the Byzantine emperor, and by analogy the empress, was a distant symbolic presence whose individual features were lost in his public image and was only recognizable through the splendor surrounding him.[115]

The notion of the imperial dress as a privileged garment of divine origin was perpetuated in texts by the emperors themselves, as indicated by the lengthy passage in which Constantine Porphyrogennetos advises his son on what grounds to reject the impertinent requests of "barbarian" rulers for imperial dress and insignia in his treatise, *De Administrando Imperio*. He claims that "some of the imperial vesture or diadems or state robes (*ek ton basileion estheton he stemmaton he stolon*)" were not made by human hands and were bestowed upon Constantine the Great by God through an angelic messenger. Further, God

> charged him [i.e. Constantine] to lay them in the great and holy church of God, after the name of that very wisdom which is the property of God, is called St. Sophia; and not to clothe himself in them every day, but only when it is a great public festival of the Lord. And so by God's command he laid them up, and they hang above the holy table in the sanctuary of this same church, and are for the ornament of the church. And the rest of the imperial vestments and cloaks (*himatia kai sagia basilika*) lie spread out upon this holy table. And when a festival of our Lord and God Jesus Christ comes round, the patriarch takes up such of these robes of state (*stola*) and diadems as are suitable and appropriate to that occasion, and sends them to the emperor, and he wears them in the procession, and only in it, as the servant and

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[114] Liudprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. F. A. Wright (London: 1993), *Antapodosis*, ch. 11, p. 13.

[115] Further examples of the importance of the close association between imperial identity and dress may be found in Liutprand's work, ibid. , *Anatpodosis*, ch. 35, p. 85 reporting about the emperor Romanos Lekapenos demanding the right to wear the imperial insignia, and in Psellos' chronicle reporting about Zoe dressing her lover Michael IV in imperial garments and seating him on the throne, see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* , Book Three, ch. 19-20, p. 77.

> minister of God, and after the use returns them again to the church, and they are laid up in it.[116]

Although this statement is blatantly false, as other sources from the same period testify that imperial insignia and robes were kept in the imperial palace,[117] it still reveals what meaning the Byzantine emperor intended to project to foreign heads of state through insignia and dress. The divine origin of the imperial regalia underscored the unique position of the Byzantine emperor as an elect of God of the earthly empire and the intimate relationship between emperor and God, and established a myth history tracing back this exceptional relationship to the founder of the Christian Empire, Constantine the Great. The imperial insignia themselves are presented as sacred objects embodying the singular covenant between emperor and God, and are kept in Hagia Sophia as relics. Regrettably, the terms referring to imperial robes are too general, and thus do not distinguish between the various specialized garments worn by the emperor.

What meaning, then, do the prominently displayed garments of empresses convey in imperial images? The empress Irene appears to have introduced the *loros* as the primary garment into the iconography of empresses in the late eighth century, since in the early Byzantine period imperial women have been typically shown in other garments, such as the *chlamys* or the *palla.* Irene selected the *loros* to set herself apart from her male colleagues and predecessors, and to propagate two chief traits of her imperial persona: iconophile orthodoxy, and philanthropic munificence towards her subjects. By the second half of the ninth century the *loros* became the imperial attire par excellence in images, yet, as has been noted, it was a cumbersome garment rarely worn during imperial ceremonials.[118] By this time the *loros* has become a universal emblem of the empire, literally embodying its wealth and power through the heavy physical display of gold,

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[116] Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio* , ch. 13, p. 67.

[117] See for instance Jenkins' comments, Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, trans. Gyula Moravcsik, ed. and R. H. Jenkins, ed. and trsl. (Budapest, London: 1949-1962), II, p. 64, and Adele La Barre Starensier, "An Art Historical Survey of the Byzantine Silk Industry" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1982), pp. 444-446.

[118] Jennifer L. Ball, "The Loros in Image and Text" (Abstracts of Papers, Byzantine Studies Conference, Harvard University, October 26-29, 2000), pp. 122-23; Ball, "Byzantine Dress," pp. 23-28; Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* , pp. 23-24.

pearls, and gemstones;[119] in addition the *loros* also articulated the empire's historical and eternal connections. This way the *loros*, a garment ultimately derived from the ceremonial dress of the Roman consul, allied Byzantium with the ancient traditions of Rome, and also linked the empire with the heavenly court of God by comparing emperors to archangels, who often appear in the *loros*.[120] The prominence of the *loros* in imperial representations acquires further significance when one considers the large number of costumes used by the emperor for his ceremonial appearances and the frequent costume change reported by the *Book of Ceremonies* during single ceremonials. Starensier observed, that the imperial wardrobe worn during ceremonials was "read diachronically as a suit of costumes" and projected the imperial dress as a mystical entity.[121] Clearly, Byzantine imperial images created an intentional dichotomy between the world of the image and the world of the "real" (i.e. ceremonial practice) through the privileging of the *loros* in imperial portraits. This dichotomy bestowed further significance onto the *loros*, which in addition to its historically accrued meanings mentioned above, by the middle Byzantine period became a visual framing device that removed the imperial figure from the realm of the every day and placed him and her into the realm of visual memory and commemoration, integrating him and her within a long line of imperial predecessors and followers. The *loros*, in this sense, served a function analogous to the omnipresent imperial halo.

Other factors may shed further light on the meaning of imperial garments in representations of empresses. These effigies represent emperor and empress as equal partners in holding imperial power and authority through matching, sometimes even identical, attires and positions within the images.[122] Yet in actuality this was not the case, since the empress's power was more limited than that of the emperor. A single statement defined the empress's role in law: "The emperor is not bound by statutes. And though

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[119] Ball, "Byzantine Dress," pp. 21-22.

[120] Ibid., pp. 46-47; for the comparison of emperor and archangels, see for example Henry Maguire, "The Heavenly Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Reserach Library and Collection, 1997), 247-58.

[121] Starensier, "An Art Historical Survey of the Byzantine Silk Industry," p. 195; for the imperial wardrobe, see ibid., pp. 182-201. A unique visual example represents the same emperor in a series of different garments in Paris Coislin 79, see Figs. 162-165.

[122] Ball links the uniformity of dress of emperor and empress to dynastic concerns, see Ball, "Byzantine Dress," p. 44.

the empress is bound by them, nevertheless, emperors give the empress the same privileges as they have themselves."[123] Nonetheless, acclamations performed during the coronation ceremonial recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* eulogize the empress as the elect of God, elevating her to the same level as the emperor. Acclamations were regularly and continuously performed during imperial ceremonials sung antiphonally by the factions:[124]

> Be welcome, empress, elevated by God. ... Be welcome, empress, protected by God. ... ... Be welcome, you ... who were elevated by divine election for the strengthening and exaltation of the world, you, whom God married to the purple. The Almighty God blessed you and crowned you with his own hand. Also, to him, who invited you to such a dignity and united with one, the emperor, multiply his years in the purple.[125]

This statement emphasized the divine origins of the empress's position and authority suggesting that her selection in marriage and her coronation were carried out directly by the hand of God. Another acclamation lauded the empress as follows: "Empresses, you were crowned by God who loves mankind and by the spiritual oil you were consecrated from high in the sky for the joy of your people, and for the downfall of all your enemies, o empresses, elects of God."[126] The empress is projected as an integral part of the imperial hierarchy and her authority is presented in similar terms to that of the emperor: she is also an elect of God and derives her power directly from God, notions that have not been expressed in treatises on Byzantine kingship or law. Similar ideas appear in the *Life of Theophano*, composed ca. 900 commemorating the devout first wife of Leo VI. The vita describes an event from her childhood that prefigured her future ascent to the throne.

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[123] Digest I, 3, 31, T. Mommsen, P. Krueger, and et al, eds., *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (Berlin: 1928-29), for English translation, see Alan Watson, *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). The same law is repeated in the Basilica II, 6, 1, see H. J. Scheltema, N. van der Wal, and D. Holwerda, eds., *Basilicorum libri LX* (Groningen: 153-1988); also see Stojan Maslev, "Die Staatrechtliche Stellung der byzantinischen Kaiserinnen," *Byzantinoslavica* 2 (1966): pp. 308-43, especially p. 309.

[124] For a discussion of the role of late antique factions see Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), for acclamations see ibid. pp. 142, 231-232, 241, 245. As Michael McCormick argued, these texts were written and sung under the supervision of a high court official, the *praipositos*, therefore they clearly register imperial ideology, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Medieval West* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 223-225; also see ODB I, pp. 10-11.

[125] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 39, p. 198; Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1935), II, ch. 48(39), p. 7.

[126] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch. 63, p. 281; Vogt, II, ch. 72(63), pp. 91-92.

According to this account, Theophano was on her way to the public baths with her nurse and handmaids when a violent rainstorm forced her to seek refuge in a church:

> Because of the violently increasing rain and the furious loud thunder brought down onto the earth, the road of their path was made impossible, [and so] the young girl as a fugitive fled into the enclosure of the church. She has run joyously to the icon of the mother of God on the right, and put her hand on it kissing it in *proskynesis*. She remained in this place doing this for many hours and she leaned her head towards the icon, and fell asleep. In the hour of her sleep, they say, the icon of the mother of God turned to the other icon near her and ordered, that oil be taken from the lamp and [be poured as] chrism on the head of the young girl. And this [other icon] took the oil but only anointed the head of the girl, and she [i.e. the icon of the Virgin] said to her: "You should not only anoint her head, but give from the oil and your fellowship to her whole body." At the same time her nurse accompanied by her handmaids came right into the church from the outside due to the lingering storm and they saw a sudden light shining forth around the girl and the white *chiton* which she wore was suddenly was died purple (*alourgis*); and being struck by fear because of the miracle, [the nurse] at once took the child into her familiar arms, asking her what happened. And the child told her what she saw and she instead of taking her to the bath carefully lead her back home to her father's house, so that she may tell him about the brilliant spectacle of the miracle, the prophecy that she saw in her.[127]

The interpenetration of different levels of existence and states of consciousness — as icons become active agents producing the miracle in which Theophano's body is transported into a vision — articulate that Theophano will ascend the imperial throne through divine will. The anointment of her whole body by a miracle-working icon of the Virgin and the apparition in the royal purple foretold her imperial destiny. The prophecy makes explicit the earlier sign witnessed during her birth reported in her vita when an eagle, frequently understood as imperial symbol, attempted to enter the house of her parents.[128] The miracle at the church also underscores Theophano's exceptional piety and closeness with the Mother of God foreshadowing her future elevation as a saint.[129]

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[127] *Life of Theophano*, 6, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," p. 4/3-21.

[128] For the eagle attempting to enter the house *see Life of Theophano*, 3 in ibid., p. 3/3-5. Theophano's birth was also foretold to her parents by an old man in a vision who also prophesied about her future glory, see *Life of Theophano*, 3 in Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," p. 2/19-25.

[129] It is significant to note that in other middle Byzantine vitae of saints the saint sometimes appears in visions dressed in purple imperial robes, and this apparition of the saint announces her newly acquired sanctity, see discussion below.

This passage is undoubtedly a fabrication, for Byzantine hagiographies, histories, or encomia often use such *topoi* to articulate the extraordinary charisma of a saint or an emperor that has already manifested itself in childhood.[130] Nevertheless, the anecdote reveals notions and expectations about the empress shared by the Byzantine elite.[131] Thus it was appropriate to articulate the exceptional quality of the empress since her selection as bride for the Byzantine emperor was seen as part of a divine plan. Similarly, the husband of Theophano, Leo VI, used the motif of prophecy when he composed the funeral oration for his father, in which he also devoted an extended passage to extolling the virtues of his mother. He states:

> In such a way she [Eudokia Ingerina] was joined with the one [Basil I], to whom since her birth, the Almighty united her. How many and what quality were the prophecies that foretold to her the empire? Because there are many, I will pass over these in silence, because I don't have the leisure to occupy myself with trifles. However, there is one thing, which I do not believe can be left aside justly, since you will understand that no one other than God caused the marriage of my father.[132]

While Leo does not bother to provide his listeners with specific references to these alleged prophecies, he is aware that his audience expects to hear about the divine sanction of his mother's selection as imperial bride, and so he complies perfunctorily.[133]

A further acclamation from the *Book of Ceremonies* also indicates that an empress was necessary for the desired order of the state:

> The world is delighted in gazing at you, emperor *autokrator*, and your city is in elation, o you, one crowned by God. The court sees in you its chief, and the scepters

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[130] See for instance the *Vita Basilii*, the biography of the emperor Basil I written by his grandson, Constantine VII, which includes a host of such prophetic events in Basil's childhood.

[131] As it has been argued persuasively, the *Life of Theophano* was written by a relative of Theophano who attempted to garner benefits for himself by offering a hagiography to the emperor Leo VI of his deceased wife. See Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show."

[132] For the original Greek and its French translation see Vogt and Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basil I par son fils Léon le sage," , pp. 53-55.

[133] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* III, 27, p. 121 and Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, *Byzantina Australiensia 11* (Canberra: 1998) III, 15, pp. 64-65 also report that a prophecy was told to Theopilos in 837, which foretold that after his son's rule members of the Martinakes family will be elevated to the throne. Mango suggested: "Evidently, these alleged prophecies are quoted because they came true, and it is only on the assumption that Eudokia Ingerina was of the Martinakes family that the text makes sense." See Cyril Mango, "Eudokia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty," *Zbornik Radova* XIV-XV (1973): 17-27, p. 20. Perhaps these are the prophecies that Leo referred to in his funeral oration.

> are delighted that you are the scepter-bearer. You decorated the throne of the imperial power with the empress as your fathers did projecting a sparkling light of good order, and this is why the state, which you made to flourish, celebrates the day of your accession.[134]

Thus the empress was seen as a splendid embodiment of the "good order," which enhanced the status of the emperor. Her radiance in part derived from the emperor's exulted charisma, yet she also had an innate brilliance as the elect of God. I believe it is this vision of the role of the empress that motivated her representation as a figure of equal importance, dressed in virtually identical garments as her spouse.

Literary Imagery of the Virgin as Empress

The meaning and significance attributed to imperial garments of the empress may be brought further into focus by an exploration of the representation of the Virgin as empress in texts and images.[135] Although there is no direct textual reference to the Virgin as queen or empress in scripture, two Old Testament passages referring to a queenly woman and the numerous references to Christ as king and lord in the New Testament led to the development of the literary image of Mary as queen.[136] The Virgin's portrayal as

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[134] Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I ch. 63, p. 282; Vogt, II, ch. 72(63), p. 91-92.

[135] Several scholars have explored the meaning of the visual representation of archangels dressed in imperial robes in the middle Byzantine period, suggesting that it to articulated the emperor's position in the earthly hierarchy and praised, elevated, and linked him with immaterial beings, while others emphasized primarily the meaning of service and subservience to God in the parallel use of the loros for archangels and emperors. See, Maguire, "A Murderer among the Angels: The Frontispicece Miniature of Paris Gr. 510 and the Iconography of the Archangels in Byzantine Art," especially pp. 66-69; Glenn Peers, "Patriarchal Politics in the Paris Gregory (B.N. gr. 510)," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997): pp. 51-71, pp. 52-53, 69; Jolivet-Lévy, "Note sur la représentation des archanges en costume impérial dans l'iconographie byzantine," especially p. 123, 126; Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* , p. 46, no. 155. Archangels were represented in imperial robes from ca. 500 on, see Cyril Mango, "St. Michael and Attis," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias (4th series)* 12 (1984): pp. 39-62, especially p. 40; he offered the hypothesis that the representation of archangels in imperial robes originated in the fifth century in a heretical or non-Christian context and proposed that the ancient mythological figure Attis was transmuted into the figure of the archangel Michael prompting the representation of archangels in imperial robes, see ibid pp. 44, 62. Jolivet-Levy pointed out the significance of Old Testament notion that nations had guardian angels protecting them who were referred to as princes, as for instance in Daniel 10,13 and 12,1, see Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, "Note sur la représentation des archanges en costume impérial dans l'iconographie byzantine," *Cahiers Archeologiques* 46 (1998): pp. 121-28, especially pp. 121-122.

[136] Malachi J. Donnelly, "The Queenship of Mary During the Patristic Period," *Marian Studies* (1953): pp. 82-108, especially pp. 84-91, also see H. Barre, "La royauté de Marie pendant les neuf premiers siècles,"

queen in texts can be traced back to the fifth century[137] and was still prevalent in the tenth century century. A kontakion *On the Virgin Mary,* dated to soon after 431 refers to the virgin as basilissa.[138] Numerous theologians brought Psalm 44:10 into connection with the Virgin; the homily of Chrysippus of Jerusalem of the fifth century is among the earliest texts in the Greek East to apply the term basilissa to Mary.[139]

The sixth century hymnographer, Romanus Melode put the following words into the mouth of the Virgin explaining the nature of her spiritual sovereignty:

> I do not disregard the grace which I receive from Thee, Master (*despota*),
> I do not discount the value which I attained when I gave birth to Thee;
> For I rule (*basileuo*) over the world,
> Since bearing Thy power (*kratos*) in my womb, I am sovereign of all (*panton krato*).[140]

The passage testifies to the Virgin's power and its true significance by employing four terms in a single sentence that all express the notion of power and authority; the text also

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Recherches de science religieuse 29 (1939): pp. 129-62, 303-34. Psalm 44(45):10(9): "King's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of O'phir" and Revelations 12:1: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars..." have been interpreted by medieval theologians as prophecies of Mary's queenship.

[137] Donnelly, "The Queenship of Mary During the Patristic Period," especially p. 85. The *Akathistos Hymn*, an early sixth century kontakion of an anonymous author, does not refer to the Virgin as queen, yet on many occasions applies the title king to Christ in ch. 1, 8, 15, 20, see Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress. The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (London, New York: 1994), pp. 150-155. For a brief discussion and further bibliography of the *Akathistos Hymn*, see ODB I, p. 44.

[138] C. A. Trypanis, *Fourteen Early Byzantine Cantica*, vol. V, *Wiener Byzantinische Studien* (Vienna: 1968), XIV, β, p. 161. Further reference to the Virgin as basilissa, see *Oratio in Simeonem et in BMV*, PG 86, 250. Timothy of Jerusalem uses the term reign (*basileuein*) in relation to the Virgin, in *Adversos nestorianos*, III, 9, PG 86, 1641.

[139] Frimin M. Schmidt, "The Universal Queenship of Mary," in *Mariology*, ed. J. Carol (Milwaukee: 1957), pp. 493-594, especially pp. 520-4; for French translation, see Barre, "La royauté de Marie pendant les neuf premiers siècles," especially p. 138. A further homily on the annunciation of uncertain authorship, attributed to Pseudo-Athanasios discusses in detail the identification between the queen mentioned in Psalm 44:10 and the Virgin using the terms *basilissa*, *kuria*, and *despoina* several times, see PG 28, 937-940. Commenting on Ps 44:10 in a hymn to the Virgin, Modestus of Jerusalem in the seventh century also emphasizes her queenship, see PG 86, 3289C-3291A, for English translation see Brian E. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), p. 89. Theoteknos of Livias in the seventh century also employs Ps 44:10 to the Virgin in his sermon on the dormition, although without calling Mary a queen, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 72.

[140] *On the Nativity II*, 2; for the Greek text, see Paul Maas and C. A. Trypanis, *Sancti Romani melodi cantica* (Oxford: 1963), p. 10; Joannes Pitra, ed., *Analecta Sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata* (Paris: 1876), I, pp. 515, 32; for the English translation, see Marjorie Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970), p. 15.

underscores that the source of her unique potency is the incarnate Christ child she carried in her body. Corippus's Latin panegyric for the coronation of Justin II in 565 includes a prayer by the empress Sophia to the Virgin addressing her as queen of heaven: "Most holy Virgin, mother of the creator of the world, queen of high heaven, at once and uniquely true mother and ever virgin. . . ."[141] In the sixth century, another Latin poet, Venantius Fortunatus lauded the Mother of God as follows, emphasizing her role in the redemption of mankind:

> Glorious among virgins, high above the stars,
> thou dost nourish at thy breast
> as a child Him who created thee.
> What unhappy Eve lost thou dost restore by thy holy Child;
> thou dost open the gates of heaven
> that sinners may rise to the stars.
> Thou art queen of the gates on high
> and of the shining halls of light.
> People redeemed, praise the life-given through the Virgin.
> Jesus, to Thee be glory who art born of the Virgin,
> with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.[142]

A further poem, *In Laudem Mariae*, of uncertain authorship but attributed to Venantius Fortuantus from ca. 590, develops the notion of the Virgin as queen of heaven more extensively, possibly under direct influences from Constantinople, as Cameron suggested.[143] The Mother of God is described as seated on a throne surrounded by a heavenly court of white-clad virgins and other saints forming a lofty senate while she

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[141] "Virgo creatoris genetrix sanctissima mundi, / excelsi regina poli, specialiter una / vera parens et virgo manens. . . ." For edition, English translation, and discussion of this text, see Cameron, ed., *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* , Book II/51-53, p. 95. Cameron suggested that the imagery of Sophia's prayer relies on Greek homilies and hymns addressing the Virgin, see ibid p. 151. Also see Corippe, *Éloge de l'empereur Justin II*, trans. Serge Antès, *Collection des Universités de France* (Paris: 1981), p. 35 for the original text and French translation, where it is noted that the expression "queen of high heaven" is derived from Statius's Thebaid 10/68.

[142] Hymn at Lauds of the Blessed Virgin, trsl. Adrian Fortescue, available at http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Faith/0506-96/article9.html

[143] For the Latin text, see PL 88, 276-283, especially 282b, 283a. Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople. A City Finds Its Symbol," *Journal of Theological Studies* XXIX (1978): pp. 79-108, especially pp. 91-96.

receives homage.[144] Her luminous royal attire is described in great detail: she wears a gold diadem with red gemstones in her hair, a resplendent necklace over her bosom, and a glittering purple garment draped around her body with a scarlet girdle and richly sparkling fringe; emerald and white topaz tiles stretch under her feet.[145] In Venantius's poem the Virgin's appearance and attire borrow directly from the splendor of the imperial court to articulate her position as queen of heaven. Coptic homilies also represent the mother of God as queen; a sermon of uncertain date, celebrating her assumption alludes to her as queen five times,[146] while further homilies attributed to Theodosios of Alexandria and Pseudo-Evodius also praise her as queen and describe her garments as having royal splendor.[147]

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[144] "Conderis in solio felix regina supreno, / cingeris et niveis lacteal virgo choris, / nobile nobilior circumsistente senatu, / consulibus celsior ipsa sedens, / six iuxta genitum regem regina perennem, / ornate ex partu, mater optima, tuo." PL 88, 282b.

[145] "Componendo caput niveum diademate fulvo, / Et gemmis rutilam comit honore comam: / Annecteus niveo pretiosa monilia collo, / Fulgore et vario pectora pura tegens. / Quam speciosum humeris imponit honoris amictum, / Splendore ardescens purpura tincta nitet! / O quoties coctum zonae micat aura per aurum, / Pallida nec pallae est fimbria luce nitens! / Quis tibi digna canat, quantum decus exeat ore, / Aut de veste tui gemma virore micet? / Quando strata jacet pedibus pretiosa smaragdus, / Quando pavimentis alba topazus adest. / Quodque oculus non vidit agens, non audit auris, Ornamenta tibi haec, pia virgo, nitent." PL 88, 283A.

[146] The text is found in the Freer Collection and has not been dated with precision. The manuscript suggests a *terminus ante quem* of 975, see, William H. Worrell, *The Coptic Manuscripts in the Freer Collection* (New York: 1923). "O Queen and resting place of the King! . . . O Joakim , truly didst you beget a great and royal gift which became the dwelling place of Immanuel!" "Because of the multitude of our sins I have mentioned these things to you today at the feast of the Queen and Mother of our Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath gathered us together today at the commemoration of His virgin mother." "O our Lady-Mother Mary, Queen and Mother of God in truth. . . . " ". . . we wishing to keep the feast of our Lady the Queen and mother of the King of life." And: "Let us, therefore, my beloved, honor the *eikon* of our Lady the veritable Queen, the holy Theotokos Mary, the mother of our God, Jesus Christ. . . " Ibid, ch. 64, p. 361, ch. 74, p. 366, ch. 75, p. 367, ch. 84, p. 372, ch. 90-91, p. 375.

[147] ". . . Arise, go into the holy place; and ye shall find on the altar heavenly garments and perfumes of the heavens, which My good Father and the Holy Ghost have sent Me for the honor of the body of My beloved mother. And when we had gone in, we brought them out to Him; and He said to us, Spread them on this bed. And when we had spread them, He said to His mother, Haste thee, O thou Queen of all women, enter these; and rest thee from the grief and the trouble of groaning." See, Theodosius of Alexandria (sixth century), *The Falling Asleep of Mary*, J. Armitage Robinson, *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels*, *Texts and Studies IV/2* (Cambridge: 1896; reprint, 1967), pp. 91-127, especially pp. 109-111, later on the same author describes the soul of the Virgin as "royal gift", ibid., p. 113. Pseudo-Evodius's sermon on the dormition uses a reference to Psalms 44:10: ". . . O my glorious members, whom I chose out of all the world, this is the day that the prophecy of My father David has been fulfilled, The queen stood at they right hand in garments worked with gold, arrayed and adorned in diverse manners. This is the day the I will receive My virgin mother, who has been to my a dwelling place on the earth for nine months, and take her up with me to the heavenly places of the heavens. . . ." ibid., p. 53; for a similar passage making reference to the Virgin's heavenly garments and her queenship, see pp. 56-57; also see references to her as queen in the

John of Thessalonica in the seventh century titles the Virgin the ruler of the universe (or mistress of all the world),[148] and the homilies of Andrew of Crete of the eighth century repeatedly call her basilissa.[149] In narrating the death of the Virgin, Andrew relates:

> . . . Christ wishes to gather us together as our host, He shows this clearly by taking up His ever-virgin mother from this earth today as queen of human nature (*basilida tes anthropon methisteti physeus*) — that mother in whose womb He Who is God took our form in a way totally beyond our power to describe. . . . For look, all of you who hear my words, look at what is now before our eyes: the queen of the nations — I mean the Church of the faithful — today leads the solemn procession for the queen of our race (*basilidi tou genous*), who today is received royally into the Kingdom of Heaven by God, the king who rules over all. The church brings in tribute today her most beautiful and festive possessions. She who turned dust into heaven [i.e. Mary] today strips the dust away, lays aside the veil of this world of change and gives back to the earth what belongs to it.[150]

Andrew's sermon suggests a strong link between the Virgin's dormition and her elevation as celestial empress. In his first homily on the dormition, Andrew develops the link between the Virgin and royal splendor further, this time through likening the Mother of God to royal garments and a royal palace; to heighten the rhetorical effect, she is identified both as a terrestrial palace and a heavenly workshop: "...royal robe (*basileios stole*) of the Word who is beyond all beings and who became a human being, earth palace of the heavenly King, celebrated workshop for God's dealings with us, utterly suitable material for the divine embodiment, divine and perfect clay for the sculptor of all

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same sermon, ibid., pp. 46, 60. For further references to Mary as queen in other Coptic sermons, see ibid., pp. 3, 9, 27, 71.

[148] *Homily on the Dormition*, ch. 1, for English translation, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , pp. 47-70. For a discussion of homilies on the dormition, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , pp. 1-47, and Brian E. Daley, S.J., ""At the Hour of our Death": Mary's Dormition and Christian Dying in Late Patristic and Early Byzantine Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): pp. 71-89.

[149] *In nativitatem beatae Mariae I*, PG 97, 820A,B; *In nativitatem beatae Mariae IV,* PG 97, 872B; *In dormitionem Sanctae Mariae I*, PG 97, 1066A; *In dormitionem Sanctae Mariae II*, PG 97, 1080B,C; *In dormitionem Sanctae Mariae III,* PG 97, 1087A,C, 1092A, 1096C, 1100A, 1102C,D, 1104A,C, (1107A,B use the terms *despoina* and *anassa*); for English translation of the dormition sermons, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , pp. 103-152.

[150] PG 97, 1080B,C; for English translation, ibid. , p. 108.

creation..."[151] Andrew's third homily on the dormition expands further the literary image of the Virgin as royal vestment:

> You are the flower of immortality, the earth that brings forth perfume, the treasure-chest of life, the shining lamp, the purple garment woven by God (*theophantos porphyra*), the royal vestment (*basilikon enduma*), the robe that God has embroidered (*theopoikiltos stole*), the lined cloak made of gold (*chrysoeides diplois*); beyond all our power of telling, you are the seam of that royal robe (*alourgis*) that makes the Word intelligible. You [Mary] are the crown of kingly power (*basileias diadema*), woven by the high priest; you are the throne on high, the gate that stands high above the heaven of heavens; you are the queen (*basilissa*) of all humanity, a title as well deserved as it is commonly used. Aside from God alone, you are higher than all beings.[152]

This passage emphasizes Mary's role in the incarnation, and likens her body to stupendous royal robes that enveloped and gave flesh to her divine son. The author devotes five clauses to characterize the vestment that is the Virgin — he describes the robe twice as purple (although both *porphyra* and *alourgis* also imply imperial status), twice as divinely manufactured, once as gold, and once as imperial. It is a garment woven and embroidered, lined and sewn together with seams. Andrew continues his laudation of the Virgin by employing further references to the paraphernalia of imperial ceremonials, for he also represents her as an imperial crown and a throne. The sermon of Modestus of Jerusalem also portrays the Virgin as a workshop and a palace, and employs the imagery of purple robes as a representation of the human flesh of Christ:

> O holy bier, bearing God's workshop for the salvation of the universe! O holy bier, bearing the palace of heaven's king. . . . Having fully clothed himself with the purple robe of our nature, "he rules over the nations" (Ps 46:9). About him, the prophet said, "Why are your robes red, as from a winepress when the grapes have been trodden down (Is 63:2)?"[153]

The imagery of the body of the Virgin as a textile workshop, and the description of the incarnate Christ whose human and divine natures were woven together on a loom

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[151] PG 97, 1068C. For English translation, see ibid. , p. 132. Later on in the same sermon, Andrew also calls the Virgin a "throne exalted" and a "standard of royalty for the heavenly race," see PG 97, 1069A, and Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 133.

[152] PG 97, 1100A; English translation in Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , pp. 143-144.

[153] For the English translation, see ibid. , p. 99.

of the flesh of his mother's womb have been developed in the greatly influential sermons of Proclus of Constantinople in the fifth century. Constas argued that this imagery may have originated in the *gynaeceum* of the imperial palace in the sphere of the virgin empress Pulcheria.[154] Proclus's imagery focuses on the process of weaving, and does not describe the visual appearance of the robe itself, although in one of his homilies the following account precedes the passage on the miraculous workings of the loom of the flesh:

> Consuls come and see, for God the heavenly consul has elected Christ as consul on earth. His richly appointed tribunal seat is the beautiful Theotokos Virgin Mary. He wears a consular toga made of seedless flesh. Its precious stones are the lives of the saints, its priceless pearls are the prophecies of the prophets. He does not go about disbursing gold, the source of disorder, but endows us with his mercy, the source of salvation.[155]

Christ's body is described as the jewel studded purple robe of the consul and emperor (*togan hypatiken*), and the Virgin is identified with the consular throne (*difros*). While here the Virgin is not described as an imperial robe, nor do the passages that specifically develop the theme of the loom of the flesh identify the Virgin's body as imperial purple, Proclus rhetoric implicitly contains these elements that were developed by later theologians.

Andrew's contemporary, the patriarch Germanos of Constantinople (d. 733) also took up the theme of the Virgin as empress, although employing the more common motif of identifying her as the throne of God: "You will be called the throne bearing God and the royal chair (*basilike cathedra*) of the King of Heaven, for you are queen and

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[154] PG 65, 712D-713A. Nicholas P. Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, no. 2 (1995): pp. 169-94. For Pulcheria's imitation of and identification with the Virgin, see ibid., pp. 173-174, and Kate Cooper, "Contesting the Nativity: Wives, Virgins, and Pulcheria's Imitatio Mariae," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. 1 (1998): pp. 31-43. Also see Nicholas Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, LXVI* (Leiden, Boston: 2003), pp. 315-358. For the great impact of this homily on Byzantine liturgy, and evidence for its widespread performance across the centuries, see Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh," p. 175, no. 24.

[155] Homily 4.2, PG 65, 712C; for English translation, see Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos, and the Loom of the Flesh," , pp. 178-179. For the Greek original and a slightly different translation, see Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* , pp. 230-231.

sovereign lady (*basilissa kai despoina*), descended from a King of the World and adorned with beauty and royal majesty."[156]

Another notable eighth century theologian, John of Damascus explored the queenship of the Virgin in a variety of contexts. In his first homily on the dormition, he states: "Your immaculate, completely spotless body was not left on earth, but you have been transported to the royal dwelling-place of heaven as queen (*basilis*), as lady (*kyria*), as mistress (*despoina*), as Mother of God, as the one who truly gave God birth."[157] In his treatise, *About the Orthodox Faith*, he employs the rhetorical juxtaposition of identifying Mary as both a servant and ruler, yet without creating a paradox, as she is servant of the creator but ruler of the created: "Assuredly she who played the part of the Creator's servant and mother is in all strictness and truth in reality God's Mother and lady (*kyria*) and queen over all (*despozdousa*) created things."[158] In the third sermon on the dormition, John develops the idea of Mary's sovereignty in opposition to the trappings of imperial ceremonials and representation:

> The bridal chamber of the Word's holy Incarnation has come to rest in her glorious tomb, as in her mansion; when she ascended to the shrine of her heavenly nuptials, to reign in public splendor with her Son and her God (*symbasileusa*), she left her tomb as a bridal chamber for those who live on earth. A tomb as bridal chamber? Yes, and one much more splendid than every other bridal chamber, for it is radiant not with flickering gold or shining silver or brilliant gems, not with silken threads or cloth of gold and spun purple (*alourgidi*), but with the divine glory of the Holy Spirit.[159]

Further theologians of the eighth century, John of Eubea[160], Cosmas Melodius,[161] and the patriarch Tarasius[162] mention the queenship of Mary in their various writings, while

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[156] PG 98, 323d-326a, for English translation, see Donnelly, "The Queenship of Mary During the Patristic Period," especially p. 98. See PG 98, pp. 307-10 regarding the royal power of the Virgin; also see p. 351.
[157] *Homilia II in Dormitionem B.V. Mariae*, PG 96, 720a, for English translation see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 189.
[158] *De Fide Orthodoxa*, PG 94, 1162a, for English translation see Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, vol. IX (Buffalo: 1900), p. 86.
[159] *Homilia III in Dormitionem B.V. Mariae*, PG 96, 756B, for English translation, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 233. For further references to Mary as queen in the writings of John of Damascus, also see PG 96, 720C and 721A (where *despoina* is used), 760A, 840A (where *anassa* is used); see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 242.
[160] *Sermon in conceptionem Deiparae*, PG 96, 1482B, C, where the term *basilida* is used.
[161] *Hymni*, PG 98, 482C uses the term *despoina.*

Joseph the Hymnographer uses extensive references to the Virgin as queen.[163] The ninth century iconophile patriarch, Theodore Studite in his encomium on the dormition addresses the Virgin as: "the queen and mistress of the world."[164]

Another cluster of texts describes the Virgin in purple garments, which are on occasion specifically identified as imperial. The Antiochene Evagrius' *Ecclesiastical History* from the sixth century contains a reference to the Virgin appearing in a purple mantle (*porphyran estheta*) and performing a miracle.[165] John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* dating to the 620-30s also recounts events in which the Virgin appears in purple robes.[166] The roughly contemporary *Chronicon Paschale* written in the 630s reports about a vision of the Avar chagan during the siege of Constantinople in 626: "I see a woman in stately dress (*semnoforusan*) rushing about on the wall all alone."[167] Although this text does not describe her dress as imperial purple, and does not identify the woman as the Virgin, scholars agree that the apparition must have been the mother of God fighting on behalf of the Byzantines; this impression is confirmed by a later re-telling of the same events. The eleventh-twelfth century writer, Cedrenus reported the following vision about the same siege:

> The barbarians saw at daybreak, when the sun was rising, a radiant woman coming out of the gates of the Blachernai accompanied by young beardless men. They

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[162] *In SS. Deiparae Presentationem*, PG 98, 1489C, the expression *basilida tes ktiseos* is used; 1500A employs the expression *basileon krataiosis*; 1500B uses the passage, *despoina, eirenes he proxenos anassa.*

[163] According to Donnelly, "The Queenship of Mary During the Patristic Period," p. 239 such remarks from Joseph's work have been counted.

[164] Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , p. 249. For further ninth century references to the Virgin as queen, see Barre, "La royauté de Marie pendant les neuf premiers siècles," p. 157, no. 1.

[165] J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius With the Scolia* (Amsterdam: 1964), IV, 36, p. 186.

[166] See chapter 46, where the Virgin appears in purple garments (*porphyrophoron*) in the company of John the Evangelist and John the Baptist in a vision of the abbot Cyriacus, and chapter 50, in which the Virgin dressed in purple (*porphyran*) beseeches Christ on behalf of a besieged Phoenician coastal city, see PG 87/ 3, pp. 2851-3112. For a discussion of the date of composition of the *Spiritual Meadow*, see H. Chadwick, "John Moschus and His Friend Sophronius the Sophist," *Journal of Theological Studies* XXV (1974): pp. 41-74, p. 41, for the manuscript tradition and translations, see ibid, pp. 43-49. The *Spiritual Meadow* was widely circulated in later periods and translated into various languages during the Middle Ages, see ODB II, p. 1415.

[167] Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628, Translated Texts for Historians 7* (Liverpool University Press, 1989), p. 180. For the limited influence of the *Chronicon Paschale* on later Byzantine sources, see ibid p. xiv. For the Greek text, see L. Dindorf, *Chronicon Paschale, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae 16-17* (Bonn: 1832), p. 725.

> thought, that she is the empress, the wife of Heraclius, and since the emperor was not in the city, she was coming out to their leader to make peace; they let her pass thinking that other people would be coming out too and they would be able to pursue and capture them. Later they saw that having passed the perimeter of their camp she was not going to their leader, and they started to pursue her. However, when they drew near her at the place called Old Cliff the female figure and her retinue disappeared from before their eyes.[168]

Although this account does not identify the woman by name, clearly it presents a miraculous appearance of the Virgin. The author dramatizes the wondrous event through a story of mistaken identity, where the appearance and demeanor of the woman suggested imperial authority, hence she was mistaken for the empress. The life of the ninth century saint, Antony the Younger from the pen of a contemporary also recounts an apparition of the Virgin dressed in purple robes and performing a healing miracle. The text relates as a certain Ioannes, his legs stricken by an ailment, saw a dream vision, in which ". . . two men dressed in white, carrying in their hand a golden chalice full of water, and a woman clothed in an exceedingly glorious purple robe (*hyperendoxon porphyrois himatiois*) struck the water. . ." with which they anointed his head to heal him.[169] Clearly, a topos has developed, where the Virgin appears accompanied by white-robed angels as an empress dressed in imperial finery escorted by courtiers.[170] The *Life of Elias Speleotes*, composed a few decades after his death in 960, recounts a vision of the dying saint; he saw white clothed men accompanying a woman in purple robes (*gynaika porphyrostolon*) and with a marvelous face – most likely the Virgin accompanied by angels.[171] The Life of Blasios of Amorion (died 912) recorded two or three decades following his demise, also contains a dream in which a woman dressed in purple garments (*porphyron*) makes

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[168] See I. Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus* (Bonn: 1838-1839), pp. 728/14-729/15; for Hungarian translation, see Samu Szádeczky-Kardoss, *Az avar történelem forrásai, Magyar Ostörténeti Könyvtár, 5* (Szeged: 1992), p. 195.

[169] For the Greek text of the vita, see F. Halkin, *Analecta Bollandiana* 62 (1944): pp. 210-23, especially ch. 9. For Antony the Younger, see ODB, I, p. 126.

[170] This literary topos conjures up the iconography of the enthroned Virgin flanked by angels, as on the sixth century Sinai icon representing the Virgin in the company of saints and angels, or on the nave mosaic of San Apollinare Nouvo where she is shown enthroned in the company of angels, see Maria Vassilaki, ed., *The Mother of God* (Athens: 2000), pp. 262-263, p. 92, fig. 46.

[171] BHG, 581; *Vita S. Eliae Spelaeotae*, ch. 79, 4-5, *Acta Sanctorum*, (Paris: 1863-1940), Sept. 3, p. 880. For Elias, see ODB I, p. 687. I thank Alice-Mary Talbot for drawing my attention to this and the next text.

guarantees to him.[172] Some of these texts make only brief references to the purple garment of the Virgin without identifying it as imperial, or calling her empress, while others offer a more elaborate vision of the Virgin as empress. It is however possible, that even when it is not specifically stated, the mention of the purple robes indicates that the Virgin appears in the guise of the empress. A passage from the *Life of Athanasia of Aegina*, which also employs the topos of the woman clad in purple garments and accompanied by angels in white robes,[173] supports this supposition. Athanasia is represented in the paradigm typically associated with the Virgin yet here the literary topos is developed fully, as Athanasia appears in the purple garment of the empress, wearing a crown and holding a royal scepter:

> When it was already morning and the divine liturgy had begun, two of the leaders of that sacred group of nuns, whose eyes of the heart of the Lord opened for such an awesome vision, observed two men, awe-inspiring in appearance and with flashing bright robes; and they had the blessed Athanasia between them. And leading her and making her stand in front of the holy sanctuary, they brought out a purple robe (*porphyrian*) decorated with gems and pearls. They dressed her like an empress and crowned her head with a crown that had crosses in the front and back. They placed in her hand a jewel-studded staff and escorted her into the divine sanctuary.[174]

Clearly the author of Athanasia's vita has drawn on a literary topos that was associated with the Virgin in order to amplify Athanasia's importance through offering a direct comparison with the Virgin, and to underscore her elevation as a saint after her death.[175]

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[172] BHG, 278; *Vita S. Blasio Amoriensi*, ch. 10, 74-86, ch. 13, 31-34, *Acta Sanctorum*, (Paris: 1863-1940), Nov. 4, pp. 662-663. For Blasios, see ODB I, pp. 294-295.

[173] The *Life of Athanasia of Aegina* survives in one copy in Vatican Gr. 1660, dated securely to 916 based on text in the manuscript itself. Athanasia most likely lived in the first half of the ninth century, although no references are present in her vita about the iconoclastic policy of the empire. Athanasia is not included in the tenth century synaxarion of Constantinople, but is present in the 1301 version of it, see Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , pp. 138-140.

[174] Ch. 14, see ibid. , p. 153.

[175] The adornment in jewels and imperial robes was also used as a literary device to portray the martyrdom of Thomais, a tenth century saint, at the hand of her abusive husband: "She adorned herself with wounds as with pearls, with hurts as with most precious stones, she was embellished by thrashings as with golden [coins], and henceforth presented herself as a queen clothed and arrayed in diverse colors before the Ruler of all. She was adorned by insults as with expensive earrings, her beauty was enhanced by the beatings, [and] she was cheered by the mockeries." See Halsall, "Women's Bodies, Men's Souls: Sanctity and Gender in Byzantium," p. 254, and Talbot, ed., *Holy Women of Byzantium. Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 308. This passage links the abject and the beautiful to express the seeming paradox of undergoing humiliation and exaltation through the very same experience, which is the basic tenet of

Clearly, the notion of the Virgin as the queen of heaven adorned in resplendent imperial garments is a consistently reoccurring topos of theological literature of the fifth through the tenth century.

The Visual Image of the Virgin as Empress

Despite the profusion of references to the Virgin as queen or empress in textual sources, no representations of her as Maria Regina survive in Byzantium, although several examples are extant from Rome. The enthroned Virgin clad in imperial dress, seated on a lyre back throne and holding the Christ child on her lap on the badly damaged fresco of the palimpsest wall in the presbytery of S. Maria Antiqua has been identified as the earliest surviving specimen of the Maria Regina iconography and dated to the six century (Fig. 182).[176] The original function of the building, converted into the Church of S. Maria Antiqua most likely in the mid to late sixth century is uncertain, yet it is a structure that may have been associated with the imperial complex of the Palatine Hill.[177] The representation of the Maria Regina on the palimpsest wall can only be dated with difficulty. It forms the lowest figural layer of a wall that has been repainted several times and into which an apse has been inserted cutting off the right side of the composition.[178] Krautheimer dated the building of the apse to 565-578[179] and concluded that the Maria

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martyrdom. The similes derived from tropes describing empresses underscore that Thomais indeed became a saint in the presence of God.

[176] G. McN. Rushforth, "S. Maria Antiqua," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 1 (1902): pp. 1-123, especially p. 67; Gregor A. Kalas, "Sacred Image/Urban Space: Image, Installation, and Rituals in the Early Medieval Roman Forum" (Ph. D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr, 1999), pp. 190-199. Also see Richard Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 97, and Christine Fiala Erlich, "The Image of Maria Regina: Definition, Significance and Function" (Master of Arts, University of Washington, 1992), p. 58-60.

[177] See John Osborne, "The Atrium of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome: A History in Art," *Papers of the British School at Rome* LV (1987): pp. 186-223, especially pp. 186-188; Per Jonas Nordhagen, "The Earliest Decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and their Date," *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia* I (1962): pp. 53-72, pl. I-VII, especially p. 54, no. 8. Krautheimer calls it a guardroom of the imperial palace, see Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* , p. 97.

[178] For an analysis of the layers found on the palimpsest wall, see Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 151, no. 4.

[179] Richard Krautheimer, *Corpus basilicarum christianarum Romae, Monumenta di antichita cristiana, 2nd series* (Citta del Vaticano: 1937-1977), II, pp. 254f, 263f. and Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* , p. 343; he accepted as credible evidence the excavator Boni's report of 1900 about three coins of Justin II (dating to 567-78) found under a column that was part of the rebuilding of the structure into a

Regina fresco of the palimpsest wall decorated a building that did not yet function as a church, and proposed that the fresco was executed between 536 (Byzantine conquest) and c. 550.[180] Steigerwad offered a somewhat later date, 552-579.[181] The date of the fresco on the palimpsest wall is conjectured based on stylistic analysis[182] and the study of the stratigraphy of the various fresco layers painted atop one another prior to the collapse of the structure in the mid-ninth century.[183]

The Virgin is dressed in a white, wide sleeved undergarment with tight golden cuffs with a purple robe over it; roundels with bird motifs outlined by pearls festoon the lower edge of her purple garment. A pearl contoured jeweled collar adorned with round and square gemstones encircles her neck; a long gem and pearl studded band is draped atop her purple garment forming a V-shape over her chest and descending down straight in front of her body while another part of the band wraps around her waist symmetrically from both sides disappearing underneath the straight hanging band at the front. This top garment, usually identified as the *loros*,[184] which developed from the triumphal trabea of

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church. On the circumstances of the finding of the coin evidence, see Osborne, "The Atrium of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome: A History in Art," pp. 189-190, no. 11. The reliability of the numismatic evidence has been questioned by Kitzinger, see Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* , p. 151, no. 4; also see Gerhard Steigerwald, *Purpurgewänder biblisher und kirchlichen Personen als Bedeutungsträger in der früchchristlichen Kunst*, ed. Ernst Dassman and Hermann-Josef Vogt, *Studien zur Alten Kirchengeschichte* (Bonn: Borengässer, 1999), p. 129,

[180] Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* , p. 97; also see Kalas, "Sacred Image/Urban Space: Image, Installation, and Rituals in the Early Medieval Roman Forum," p. 199. Nordhagen believes that the date of transformation of the structure into a church can not be established with certainty, see Nordhagen, "The Earliest Decorations in Santa Maria Antiqua and their Date," , p. 55, no. 1, however, he indicates that it is conceivable that the structure was turned into a church before the Maria Regina fresco of the palimpsest wall was executed, ibid., p. 56.

[181] Steigerwald, *Purpurgewänder biblisher und kirchlichen Personen als Bedeutungsträger in der früchchristlichen Kunst* , p. 130.

[182] Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* , p. 97.

[183] Scholars surmise that the building collapsed in 847 during an earthquake mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis*, see Rushforth, "S. Maria Antiqua," p. 9; Osborne, "The Atrium of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome: A History in Art," pp. 189-190. For the earthquake, reported by the *Liber Pontificalis*, see *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*, trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), ch. 105/12, p. 115. Rushforth emphasized that the building was not abandoned completely in the ninth century and that at least its vestibule (atrium) continued in use till the last quarter of the eleventh century; Osborne offered a similar view, although he put the final date of use possibly as late as the first half of the twelfth century, see Osborne, "The Atrium of S. Maria Antiqua, Rome: A History in Art," p. 222.

[184] See for example, Joseph Wilpert and Walter N. Schumacher, *Die Römische Mosaiken der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV-XIII. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1976), p. 77.

the consular costume in the sixth century,[185] is represented with a series of irregularities.[186] If the fresco indeed dates to the sixth century, this is the earliest extant representation of the *loros* dress, and the earliest example of a woman dressed in the *loros*.[187]

The crown of the Virgin survives only partially. It consists of a purple bonnet framing the face and completely covering the hair and decorated with round and square gemstones framed by pearls.[188] Atop the bonnet sits a crown with a large gemstone in the middle in the shape of a square topped by a triangle and surrounded by pearls. The central gemstone projects above the outline of the rest of the crown in a triangular shape, and is flanked by two square stones also framed by pearls. Due to the damage of the fresco, it is unclear whether the crown had further projections on the sides. It is possible, although not certain, that pendilia were attached to the crown. This crown is similar but not identical to surviving representations of female imperial crowns of the late fifth and sixth century, such as the crown of Theodora in San Vitale, or the crowns shown on the

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[185] See Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* , p. 18, with further references.

[186] The *loros* at this stage of its development is a band of uniform width, however, this is not the case on the palimpsest wall fresco, as the section hanging down below the feet of the child is significantly wider than the sections draped across the Virgin's chest or over her waist; further, the *loros* is typically wrapped around the body so that its trail drapes over the left arm and hangs down the side, quite differently from the arrangement of the garment at S. Maria Antiqua.

[187] The first representation of the *loros* costume of an emperor is found on the coins of Justinian II (687-692), see George P. Galavaris, "The Symbolism of the Imperial Costume as Displayed on Byzantine Coins," *ANS Museum Notes* 8 (1958): pp. 99-117, especially pp. 105-107; J. D. Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, vol. 144, *Numismatic Notes and Monographs* (New York: 1959); Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , II/2 pp. 569-570; Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th-15th Centuries)* , p. 18. Female figures have been shown on occasion in the predecessor of the *loros*, as for instance Licinia Eudoxia on her coins and on a medallion of the fifth century, for the medallion, see Jannic Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris: Bibliothèqe Nationale, Musée du Louvre, 1992), no. 77, for her coins, see Richard Delbrueck, *Spätantike Kaiserporträts von Constantinus Magnus bis zum Ende des Westreichs, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1933), pl. 24, Licinia Eudoxia no. 6. Female personifications also appear in the triumphal *trabea*, as seen on the consular diptych of Philoxenos from 525, see Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , no. 18. These representations, however, only show the busts of the figures, therefore it is impossible to say how exactly the garment was worn.

[188] For a discussion of early Byzantine female head-coverings, see Melita Emmanuel, "Hairstyles and Headdresses of Empresses, Princesses, and Ladies of the Aristocracy in Byzantium," *Deltion tes christianikes archaiologikes hetaireias* 4/17 (1993-94): pp. 113-28, especially p. 114.

marble heads of Ariadne, or on the empress ivories in Vienna and Florence.[189] All of these representations show a heavy bonnet decorated with pearls and gems atop which rises the band of the crown.

No other early medieval image of the Maria Regina in Italy represents the same garment as the one found on the palimpsest wall in St. Maria Antiqua. A mosaic panel of the orant Maria Regina, originally located above the entrance of the east wall of the Oratory of pope John VII at St. Peters in Rome but moved to the church of San Marco in Florence in the seventeenth century (Figs. 183-184), shows the garment typically represented on images of the Maria Regina in Rome.[190] Although the panel has undergone some restoration, it gives a fairly accurate impression of the original appearance of the Virgin's figure and costume. The Mother of God wears a purple lower garment with long, narrow sleeves and wide jeweled cuffs hugging her wrists tightly, atop which she has a purple robe with elbow length open sleeves. The robe is girded with a golden belt with a central red gemstone right below her bosom and decorated with two pearl and gem-studded roundels on her shoulders; the robe's uneven length cuts across the Virgin's lower body diagonally, made visible by its pearl studded hem. Under the top layer of the robe a second layer of drapery and the undergarment are visible around the Virgin's feet. The mother of God also wears a wide, pearl and gem studded collar and an elaborate, high crown with triangular projections and pendilia.

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[189] For comments on the crown of the Maria Regina on the palimpsest wall see Steigerwald, *Purpurgewänder biblisher und kirchlichen Personen als Bedeutungsträger in der früchchristlichen Kunst*, pp. 124-126. For a discussion and reproductions of the marble heads of Ariadne, see McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses*, pp. 83-88, for a discussion of the empress ivories in Vienna and Florence, see ibid 168-178, and Diliana Nikolova Angelova, "The Ivories of Ariande and the Construction of the Image of the Empress and the Virgin Mary in Late Antiquity" (Masters thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1998).

[190] The right side of the panel originally included the patron, John VII, offering up the model of the chapel to the Mother of God and the donation panel formed the center of an extensive Christological cycle, as attested by the seventeenth century drawings of Grimaldi; for a reproduction of Grimaldi's drawing, see Wilpert and Schumacher, *Die Römische Mosaiken der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV-XIII. Jahrhundert*, p. 68, fig. 41. There is in fact great consistency in the representation of the garment on eighth through tenth century Maria Regina images in Rome; the Madonna della Clemenza in S. Maria in Trastevere, the Maria Regina images in the Theodotus chapel, and the atrium of St. Maria Antiqua all show the same dress as found on the mosaic originating at the Oratory of John VII. Unfortunately the shape of the garment is impossible to make out on the ninth century fresco of the Maria Regina in the lower church of San Clemente, see Ursula Nilgen, "Maria Regina - Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1981): pp. 3-33, fig. 4, fig. 6, fig. 7; John L. Osborne, "Early Medieval Painting in San Clemente, Rome: the Madonna and Child in the Niche," *Gesta* 20, no. 2 (1981): pp. 299-310, fig. 2.

Scholars have identified this garment in various ways, as "diagonal dalmatic," *trabea*, or *cyclas* costume.[191] Steigerwald, who argued for the identification of the garment as a *cyclas* costume based on a text of Ventatius Fortunatus also noted its similarity to the golden dress worn by the Virgin on the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome and by female saints in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.[192] Similar dresses are also found on the early ninth century mosaics representing female saints (but not the Virgin) in the apse and St. Zeno Chapel of the Basilica of Santa Prassede and in the apse mosaic of S. Cecilia in Rome.[193] Clearly this garment was popular in representations of female saints in medieval Italy between the fifth and ninth centuries. However, no images survive representing securely identifiable empresses in this garment,[194] although it is possible that this attire was part of the wardrobe of imperial women. This is suggested by the representation of an imperial family in a seventh century manuscript in Naples (Fig. 185).[195] The page shows an ink drawing of an emperor and three imperial women. Although the drawing is difficult to make out, the women appear to wear the

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[191] Carlo Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere* (Rome: 1961), p. 66, W. de Grüneisen, *Sainte Marie Antique* (Rome: 1911), p. 178 call the garment a diagonal dalmatic; Per Jonas Nordhagen, "The Mosaics of John VII (705-707 A.D.)," *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia* 2 (1965): pp. 121-66, especially p. 124 calls it a *trabea*, while Steigerwald, *Purpurgewänder biblisher und kirchlichen Personen als Bedeutungsträger in der früchchristlichen Kunst* , pp. 92-123 identifies it as a *cyclas* costume.

[192] For discussion of the text from Ventantius Fortunatus, see Steigerwald, *Purpurgewänder biblisher und kirchlichen Personen als Bedeutungsträger in der früchchristlichen Kunst* , pp. 101-102.

[193] Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312-1308* , pp. 123-135.

[194] From the late fourth through the late eighth century the most frequently represented garment of empresses is the *chlamys* on surviving images, as exemplified by the Trier Ivory, the mosaic of Theodora in San Vitale, the coin representations of empresses from Flacilla (383) through Martina (629), and the Ariadne Ivories. Exceptions are provided by the numismatic effigies of Licina-Eudoxia, which on occasion show her in the *trabea* and by steelyard weights that represent empresses consistently in the *palla*, as does the marble statuette in the Louvre dating to ca. 400. For the Trier Ivory, see Leslie Brubaker, "The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): pp. 258-85; for the mosaic of Theodora in San Vitale, see Anne L. McClanan, "Ritual and Representation of the Byzantine Empress' Court at San Vitale, Ravenna" (Radovi XIII. medunarodnog kongresa za starokršcansku arheologiju 1994: Split-Porec (Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae), Split - Porec, 1998), pp. 11-20; for the coins of empresses of the fourth-seventh centuries, see Leslie Brubaker and Helen Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," *Gender and History* 12, no. 3 (2000): pp. 572-94; for a medallion of Licinia Eudoxia, see Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , no. 77, pp. 127-128; for steelyard weights, see McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses* , pp. 29-64; for the Louvre statuette, see Durand, *Byzance. L'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* , no. 4, pp. 36-37.

[195] Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples, IB 18, f. 4v. See H. Buchthal and O. Kurtz, *A Hand List of Illuminated Oriental Christian Manuscripts* (London: 1942), p. 45, no. 203; T. Velmans, "Le dessin à Byzance," *Monuments et Mémoires* 59 (1974): pp. 137-70, especially p. 141, fig. 6; Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 14-20.

garment described above tightened below their bosoms by wide, jeweled belts and draped around their lower bodies in a diagonal fashion. Some scholars identified the dress of the central female figure as the *loros*, presumably based on the parallel lines running down its front; there is however no reason to identify these lines as an attempt to render the *loros*, as the *loros* in this period was draped across the chest and did not run down in front of the body in a straight line until the introduction of the modified loros in the tenth century.[196] The identification of the four imperial figures is controversial, some scholars believe that the image represents the emperor Heraklios and his family, while others argue that it is a representation of Job with his daughters dressed in imperial garments, yet a seventh century date is generally agreed upon.[197] Bridging the two views, Spatharakis suggested that although the representation portrays Job and his family it was modeled on a portrait of the family of Heraklios, and so it may be considered an imperial portrait indirectly.[198] Regardless of whether the drawing represents the family of Job or Heraklios, it seems clear that the representation of the regalia and costume of the emperor is accurate and follows authentic imperial models. Although the representation of the dress of the female figures is less detailed and more difficult to discern, it is possible that it also followed imperial models, and thus presents a faithful rendering of the dress of imperial women in the seventh century.

The crown of the Virgin on the mosaic of the oratory of John VII (Fig. 184) is comprised of a jeweled band decked out with two rows of gemstones, white below and

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[196] For the identification of the garment as the *loros*, see Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , p. 15. The female donor is represented with a similar garment decorated with a band running down from under her collar to the bottom of her garment on the sixth century Egyptian tapestry showing Hestia Polyolbos in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks. Her garment is tightened with a jeweled belt below her bosom, it is decorated with a wide collar and the upper layer of the garment appears to be draped around the lower part of her body diagonally; there is no reason to interpret this garment as the *loros*, see Ioli Kalavrezou, ed., *Byzantine Women and Their World* (Cambridge, MA, New Haven, London: Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2003), p. 164, fig. 15. For the introduction of the modified *loros*, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* , III/1, p. 121.

[197] Zoega and Kurtz suggested that the portrait shows Job and his family, while Ainalov, Delbrueck, and Velmans proposed that they represent Heraklius and his family, see G. Zoega, *Catalogus Codicum Copticorum* (Rome: 1810), p. 178, no. XXV, Tab. VII; O. Kurtz, "An Alleged Portrait of Heraclius," *Byzantion* 16 (1942-43): pp. 102-64; D. V. Ainalov, *The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Art* (St. Petersburg: 1900), pp. 66-68, fig. 33; Richard Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte 2* (Berlin, Leipzig: 1929), 270-274, n. 27, fig. 1; Velmans, "Le dessin à Byzance," , esp. p. 141

[198] Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* , pp. 16-20.

blue above, from which three triangular projections spring topped by round jewels. The triangular projection in the middle contains a blue stone and is topped by a white jewel, while the projections on the side have red stones in their middle and are topped by red jewels. Three heavy rows of pearls hang down from the band of the crown forming the rich pendilia. The crown of the Virgin on the icon in Trastevere (Fig. 187) has a similar design, but here the band of the crown is decorated with one row of gemstones framed by pearls, a large rectangular blue stone in the middle, and smaller, square stones on the two sides, red in color. Three projections spring from the band of the crown, in the shape of ovals outlined by pearls and topped by tri-lobed ornaments. Three rows of pearl pendilia hang from the two sides of the crown. These two crowns show similarities with the representations of crowns of empress on coins of the eighth and ninth centuries, particularly with the crowns of Irene, Theodora, and Zoe Carbonopsina, yet are not identical with them (Figs. 30, 39, 46). The crowns represented on the coins tend to have two projections on the sides and a cross in the middle, as on the coins of Irene and Theodora, although the crown represented on the gold coins of Zoe Carbonopsina has three oval projections, with the mid projection placed in the middle of the band of the crown rather than atop of it with a cross.[199]

The analysis of the garments and crowns of the extant Maria Regina representations from Rome suggests the following conclusions. The Maria Regina on the palimpsest wall of St. Maria Antiqua is dressed in the *loros* garment not frequently worn by empresses in surviving representation of the fifth through seventh centuries, although on occasion empresses may be shown in this garment, as was the case with Licinia Eudoxia in the fifth century, and this garment also appears as the dress of personifications on consular diptychs in the sixth century. The crown of the Maria Regina of the palimpsest wall shares similarities with representations of late fifth and sixth century crowns of empresses. Later Maria Regina images from the eighth century Rome show the Virgin in a different garment, identified by Steigerwald as the *cyclas* dress. No empresses of the fifth through ninth centuries are represented in this garment, with the

[199] Unfortunately because of damage, the representations of the crowns do not survive on the Maria Regina representations in the Theodotus Chapel and in the atrium of St. Maria Antiqua, while the image of the Maria Regina in San Clemente is badly damaged and does not supply sufficient visual information about the shape of the Virgin's crown.

possible exception of a seventh century manuscript illumination that may represent the family of Heraklios. However, one must keep in mind that no sculpted or painted representations of empresses survive from the second half of the sixth century through the last quarter of the ninth century that could supply parallels to the Maria Regina representations, and no images of empresses come down to us from the period 641-780. Coins of empresses of the late eighth through the early tenth century provide parallels to the representation of the crowns shown on the two early eighth century panels of the Maria Regina image. Therefore, it is difficult to say conclusively that the eighth century Maria Regina representations in Rome diverge in their costume from the costume of Byzantine empresses, as we simply do not have enough information about the dress of imperial women from to mid-seventh through the mid-ninth century.

While numerous scholars have suggested that the iconography of the Maria Regina did not exist in Byzantium,[200] others argued for its existence despite the lack of extant visual evidence.[201] Lawrence traced the emergence of the iconography of the Maria Regina to the sixth century Rome, and followed this visual tradition particular to medieval Italy up to the eleventh century, when it appears in Northern Europe.[202]

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[200] See for example, Marion Lawrence, "Maria Regina," *Art Bulletin* VII (1924-25): pp. 150-61, especially pp. 152, 157; Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere* , p. 112; Robert Deshman, "Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and Medieval Art," *Word and Image* 5, no. 1 (1989): pp. 33-70, especially p. 37; Kalas, "Sacred Image/Urban Space: Image, Installation, and Rituals in the Early Medieval Roman Forum," p. 193.

[201] For this view, see Osborne, "Early Medieval Painting in San Clemente, Rome: the Madonna and Child in the Niche," p. 306, who proposed tentatively that the iconography might have originated in the Byzantine East. Also see Maria Andaloro, "I mosaici parietali di Durazzo o dell'origine Constantinopolitana del tema iconografico di Maria Regina," in *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst, Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann gewidet*, ed. Otto Feld and Urs Peschlow (Bonn: 1986), pp. 103-12, who argues based on the mosaic identified as Maria Regina in Dyrrachium (Durazzo) in Albania that the Maria Regina iconography was found in the Greek East in the pre-iconoclastic period. Yet one must keep in mind that Dyrrachium, located along the eastern coast of the Adriatic see, was a diocese dependent on Rome till the eigth century and its community spoke both Greek and Latin, and it only became a Byzantine theme in the ninth century, see Nicole Thierry, "Une mosaïque a Dyrrachium," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 17-18 (1968): pp. 227-29, ODB I, p. 668. Thus the mosaic from Dyrrachium does not supply convincing evidence for the existence of the iconography of the Maria Regina in the Greek East. Only two representation of the Virgin in the guise of an empress survive from the Greek East, both from a fairly late period: the Virgin of the Pege is shown in imperial robes in a manuscript at Mt. Athos, at the Monastery of Esphigmenou (cod. 14, f. 401r, v) dated to the eleventh century, see S. M. Pelekanides, *The Treasures of Mt. Athos, Illuminated Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Athens: 1975), figs. 376-377; a Maria Regina painting from the twelfth century is found on Rhodes, see P. Lojacono, "Pitture parietali Byzantine rodiote," *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 8 (1953): pp. 175-86, fig. 7.

[202] Lawrence, "Maria Regina," p. 150.

Bertelli, on the other hand, suggested that it was conceived in the court of Theoderic in Ravenna.[203] Kalas proposed that the earliest extant Maria Regina representation in S. Maria Antiqua, whose location he identified as the vestibule to the imperial palace, had a religious prophylactic function and that the protective nature of the image was articulated through the imperial dress of the Virgin, and suggested: "the Maria Regina image asked the viewers to see the optimal form of imperial power as one that offered protection to and placed its authority at the service of Christ."[204] In his view, the imperial attire of the Virgin expresses her servitude towards Christ and engenders a response of servitude by the faithful.[205] Herrin suggested that the iconography of the Roman Maria Regina possibly responded to a vacancy left by the removal of the imperial court from Rome after 476 when female authority disappeared from the West, and images of the Virgin as empress served to fill a need for feminine power and authority.[206] Yet a direct chronological link between these events cannot be established. It has been shown that by the eighth century the popes used this iconography to visually claim their independent authority.[207]

It has been proposed that the Maria Regina iconography is absent in Byzantium because "actual human empresses had cornered the use of full imperial regalia,"[208] yet, it perhaps reflects different concerns. Constantinople is said to have possessed "actual" pieces of the Virgin's clothing since the fifth century, which were famous relics publicly

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[203] See Bertelli, *La Madonna di Santa Maria in Trastevere* , pp. 51-52.
[204] Kalas, "Sacred Image/Urban Space: Image, Installation, and Rituals in the Early Medieval Roman Forum," p. 199.
[205] Ibid., pp. 190-195, 197-198.
[206] Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* , p. 16.
[207] Ladner noted political overtones in the image of Maria Regina commissioned by John VII (705-707) for the Oratory of St. Peter's, which in his view countered imperial claims and aspirations for Rome and underscored the primacy of the papacy vis-à-vis the patriarch of Constantinople, see G. Ladner, *I ritratti del papi nell'antichità e nel medioevo* (Vatican City: 1941), p. 88-95; Deshman, in addition, emphasized the intercessory role of the Maria Regina on behalf of the pope, see Deshman, "Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and Medieval Art," pp. 41-44. Stroll's analysis focused on the icon of the Virgin at S. Maria in Trastevere in the eighth century and found that its message emphasized the temporal authority of the pope who only accepted a heavenly overlord above himself, see Mary Stroll, "Maria Regina: Papal Symbol," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woddbridge and Rochester: 1997), pp. 173-204, especially pp. 176-177. Also see Nilgen, "Maria Regina - Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?" who believed that twelfth century images of the Maria Regina promoted the Virgin as an embodiment of the Christian Church, and in this sense the iconography bolstered the popes' claim for papal authority; in her view such meaning may have been also communicated by early medieval images of the Maria Regina.
[208] Judith Herrin, "The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium," *Past and Present* 169 (2000): pp. 3-35 p. 16.

venerated at popular Marian shrines in the city.[209] Various traditions ascribe the arrival of Marian garment relics to Constantinople to the reign of Arcadius (395-424),[210] Pulcheria (mid-5th century),[211] and Leo I (457-474).[212] Although Pulcheria's connection with the translation of the Virgin's robe to Constantinople is only attested in later textual sources, the emphatic textile imagery of Proclus' sermons support Pulcheria's connection with the establishment of the Virgin's robe in Constantinople, as Carr argues persuasively.[213] Yet, Mango offered a different interpretation, in his view Pulcheria's

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[209] Norman Baynes, "The Finding of the Virgin's Robe," *Annuaire de l'institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves* IX (1949): pp. 87-95. Ambrose of Milan mentioned that his sister received a relic of the Virgin's veil from the pope in Rome, see Cooper, "Contesting the Nativity: Wives, Virgins, and Pulcheria's Imitatio Mariae," p. 36. Carr recently examined the hopelessly entangled evidence attesting to Marian textile relics and their significance in Constantinople, Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," in *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon, *The New Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 59-93.

[210] A homily of the patriarch Euthymius (901-912) mentions that Arcadius was given a garment relic of the Virgin, her belt, and that he placed this in a reliquary at the Chalkoprateia, which was then taken out during the reign of Leo VI to heal his wife Zoe, see M. Jugie, "Homélies mariales byzantines," *Patrologia Orientalis* XVI, no. 3 (1922): pp. 483-86. The same story is also related in the Menologion of Basil II (ca. 1000), see PG 117, pp. 613-614. However, the latter text does not mention the name of the shrine, it only refers to the Soros. Carr, relying on the work of Patterson Sevcenko, related these texts and events to the Blachernai, while Tougher believes they refer to the Chalkoprateia, see Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," p. 63, Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 143-144.

[211] The *Euthymiac History*, surviving only in an interpolation into a sermon of John of Damascus, reports about the arrival of dresses and the funeral shroud of the Virgin to Constantinople during the reign of Pulcheria, and their translation to the Blachernai shrine, see PG 96, 721-54, especially 749B, 752A, for English translation, see Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary. Early Patristic Homilies* , pp. 224-226. The Menologion of Basil II c. 1000 also reports about the translation of the Virgin's funerary robe to the Blachernai during the reign of Marcian (and Pulcheria), PG 117, pp. 519-520. The thirteenth-fourteenth century writer, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos's *Historia Ecclesiastica* credits Pulcheria with depositing garment relics of the Virgin from Jerusalem at the Blachernai, while also suggests that Leo I also gave a garment relic of the Virgin to the same church, see PG 146:1061 A-B, 147:41D, 44 b-45B. For an analysis of these passages, see Michel Van Esbroeck, "Le culte de la Virgine de Jérusalem à Constantinople aux 6e-7e siècles," *Revue des études Byzantines* 46 (1988): pp. 181-90, especially pp. 185-86.

[212] A tenth century manuscript attributed to Theodore Synkellos, a seventh century author, describes how a garment relic of the Virgin (*esthes*) was brought to Constantinople by the patricians Galbios and Kandidos during the reign of Leo I and deposited in a precious reliquary at the Blachernai. The Greek text is found in Paris gr. 1147, fols.257-258v, Vatican Palat. Gr. 317, fols.36v-39r, and Vaican Ottob. Gr. 402, fols. 73v-76r; it has been published in F. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monothelitarum* (Paris: 1648), pp. 751-88 and in Antoine Wenger, *L'assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle. Études et documents* (Paris: 1955), pp. 293-303 with French translation. For the English translation of a section, see Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312-1453. Sources and Documents* , pp. 34-35. A brief version of this narrative is found in the Menologion of Basil II commemorating the translation of the relic to Blachernai on July 2, see PG 117, pp. 517-518.

[213] Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," p. 64.

connection with the Virgin's robe was the result of a conscious rewriting of history as the relics may have been tainted by heretical associations.[214]

An early seventh century text attributed to the pen of Theodore Syncellus narrating events of the years 619-620 reports the opening of the reliquary that contained the Virgin's robe and describes it as a simple wool garment, explicitly comparing it to more expensive, but less durable imperial silks:[215]

> They saw a tiny piece of imperial purple which they assumed was the robe of the Theotokos. And yes, yes, they actually cut off a piece of the purple, the robe as they thought, thinking to steal it. . . . Opening up the seals which he himself [the patriarch] had placed there originally, he found the imperial purple wrapped with myrrh and other perfumes. And opening that he found the robe of the true empress, the Mother of God, shining out with her own grace and power. And see the divine miracles of the Word of God! For there was seen at once the truth of the wonder and the manifest power of the Theotokos. For the imperial purple was totally destroyed and worn away, although silk cloth lasts a long time. But the divine robe, woven from perishable wool – both warp and woof the same wool of the same color – had suffered no destruction at all, but was completely intact, whole and indestructible, evidence of the indestructibility and untouchability of the indestructibility and untouchability of the wearer, as one would expect. . . . it not only clothed the Mother of God, but that in it she actually wrapped the Word of God Himself, when he was a little child and gave him milk. Whence rightly this divine and truly royal garment is not only the cure for every illness, but justly is incorruptible and indestructible, proclaiming the indestructibility and incorruptibility of its wearer.[216]

Clearly, the author exploits the obvious paradox of the perishable silk and the durable wool, and presents the Virgin's garment as emphatically non-imperial, yet overwhelmingly powerful. Clearly, the juxtaposition with imperial silks is intended to underscore and dramatize the exceptional quality of the fabric of the Virgin's robe and its potency.

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[214] Cyril Mango, "The Origins of the Blachernae Shrine at Constantinople," Radovi XIII. medunarodnog kongresa za starokrščansku arheologiju 1994: Split-Porec (Acta XIII Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae), Split - Porec, 1998, pp. 61-76.

[215] Averil Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-century Constantinople," *Byzantion* XLIX (1979): pp. 42-56. Also see Averil Cameron, "The Early Cult of the Virgin," in *Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art.*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2000), pp. 3-15; Cyril Mango, "Constantinople as Theotokoupolis," in *Mother of God. Representations of hte Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Athens: 2000), pp. 17-25.

[216] Translated in Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-century Constantinople," p. 53.

The importance of the Virgin's miracle working garments was woven into the fabric of daily life in Constantinople, as a series of celebrations commemorated them, since the *maphorion* protected the city during the Avar siege in 626 and Arab siege in 718.[217] The deposition of the Virgin's robe at the Blachernai after the Avar attacks of 626 was celebrated on July 2, as attested by the Synaxarion of Constantinople,[218] a feast established in the early seventh century,[219] while the defeat of the Arabs in 718 was commemorated at the Blachernai on June 20. Other celebrations also highlighted the importance of the Virgin's robe, thus the imperial Friday visits included veneration at the *episkepsis* in the Church of the Virgin at the Blachernai, a term that may refer to the garment relic; further, Friday night vigils celebrated by the populace traversed the city from the Blachernai to the Chalkoprateia, which also housed Marian garment relics in its Soros, linking the two primary Marian shrines of Constantinople that housed her garment relics.[220] Two authors of the eighth century, Andrew of Crete and patriarch Germanos left behind sermons delivered in churches of Constantinople discussing the belt of the Virgin stained with mother's milk.[221] Thus the robe of the Virgin was celebrated regularly from the seventh century on (but possibly from the fifth century), and in 860 the garment relic preserved at the Blachernai was used by the patriarch Photios to repel the Russian attack, an event commemorated in a homily. In this text Photios does not describe the appearance of the garment, but mentions how when it was carried around the walls of Constantinople it embraced the city to offer protection.[222] We are also informed that the patriarch Euthymius gave a sermon about the garment relic of the Virgin and the

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[217] Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," p. 61.
[218] Hyppolite Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye, Acta Sanctorum, LXI, 1. Propyleum ad Acta Sanctroum Novembris.* (Bruxelles: 1902), p. 793.5-9. Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," p. 61 emphasizes that the feast did not celebrate the original deposition of the robe at Blachernai.
[219] The same text quoted above mentions the establishment of the feast of the robe of the Virgin, see Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe: An Episode in the History of Early Seventh-century Constantinople," p. 43.
[220] Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," pp. 62, 80-81, no. 12, no. 14.
[221] See Combefis, *Historia haeresis monothelitarum* , pp. 789-804; and PG 98, 371-84, especially 377. Andrew's sermon was delivered at the Blachernai, however, it is unclear as to which Marian church was the recipient of Germanos' homily, see Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin's Veil in the Middle Ages," pp. 62, 82, no. 21.
[222] Cyril Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 102.

swaddling clothes of Christ housed at the Chalkoprateia during the reign of Leo VI.[223] Further, Saint Andrew the Fool had a vision at the Church of the Blachernae in which the Virgin's robe played a significant role.[224] St. Andrew witnessed as the mother of God arrived to the sanctuary to pray, and:

> When she had prayed, with her beautiful dignity she removed her veil, which appeared like a flash of lightning, from her wholly immaculate head and took it — it was large and awe-inspiring — in her wholly immaculate hand and spread it over all the people standing there. For a long while the admirable men saw it stretched out over the people, radiating the glory of the Lord like amber. As long as the Holy Mother of God was there the veil was also visible, but when she had withdrawn they could no longer see it. No doubt she had taken it away with her, but her favor she left to those who were there.[225]

Clearly, the apparition Andrew witnessed makes visible the belief in the protective power of the Virgin's miraculous garment deposited at the Blachernae. By the late eleventh century the miraculous quality of the robe was translated into and institutionalized in an icon at the Blachernae church which served as the focal point in the practice of the "usual miracle," although it was no longer the robe itself but the icon and its covering that performed the miracle.[226]

Clearly much information circulated about the Virgin's garment relics in Constantinople from the seventh century on, but possibly as early as the fifth century. Information about the robe's wool material could have been common knowledge in the city given the prominence of the relics and their role in the religious life in the city. It is possible that because Constantinople had the Virgin's robe and information about its simple wool material expressly in opposition to the imperial purple circulated in the city,

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[223] M. Jugie, "Homélies mariales byzantines," *Patrologia Orientalis* XVI, no. 3 (1922): pp. 483-86; Patricia Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP.*, vol. 3, *Bibliothèque de Byzantion* (Bruxelles: 1970), pp. 172-173.

[224] Mango dated the text to the seventh century, and Rydén proposed a date in the 960s, see Lennart Rydén, *The Life of St. Andrew the Fool, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 4* (Uppsala: 1995).

[225] Ibid. , p. 255. See the discussion of this passage in Chapter III.

[226] For a discussion of this event, see Bissera V. Pentcheva, "Rhetorical Images of the Virgin: The Icon of the 'Usual Miracle' at the Blachernai," *RES. Journal for Anthropology and Aesthetics* 38 (2000): pp. 34-55; also see Chapter III.

visual representations of the Virgin in imperial robes were not considered to be appropriate.[227]

Conclusion

As we have seen, the beautiful body of the empress was an important ideological locus that could articulate seemingly contradictory messages. Emphatic discussions about the beauty of the empress obliquely reflected her growing importance in imperial affairs in the late eighth and ninth centuries, and provided a framework that made the discussion about powerful women palatable to the Byzantine mind, as beauty did not imply power, yet, was tightly linked with notions of moral authority and virtue, and was a primary characteristic of saints, emperors, and was presented as a driving force of a successful marriage.

In images and some ceremonials the empress's body helped to convey a vision of the imperial office as an exalted, divinely inspired eternal entity, while the more emphatically physical view of the empress articulated in various texts and ceremonies helped to propagate a corporeal view of the empress and the imperial office by incorporating notions about fertility and sexual appeal, infirmity, and mortality into the public view of her body. Clearly, the public image of the empress incorporated a positive vision of her physical force and sexual potency articulating dynastic ideology and may also reflect the increased significance of the status of the institution of marriage, which became a sacrament in the tenth century. A corporeal view of the empress's body also helped to forge a view of the empress in the Byzantine mind that traversed the physical and ideological gap between the ruling family and the populace.

As has been demonstrated, imperial garments were essential visual signifiers establishing imperial identity in images and court ceremonials. Imperial attires were projected on occasion as sacred, relic-like vestments that embodied and perpetuated the unique connection between the Byzantine emperor and God. The overwhelming

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[227] Nilgen observed, that the overwhelming popularity of the representation of the Virgin in the purple *maphorion* in Byzantine iconography may be directly related to the presence of the Virgin's relics in the Blachernai since the late fifth century, see Nilgen, "Maria Regina - Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?," p. 20, no. 43.

popularity of the *loros* dress in images of the Middle Byzantine period reflected a new function ascribed to this garment in visual images; because of the apparent disjunction between ceremonial practice (in which the *loros* was worn rarely) and visual imagery, the *loros* became a garment associated with the notion of perpetuating imperial memory. The identical or nearly identical imperial garments worn by emperors and empress in Middle Byzantine images also underscored that the empress was a divinely elected consort by the side of the emperor and that she embodied the desirable order of the state and its hierarchy.

Imperial garments were also bestowed on the Virgin in Byzantine texts, and in early medieval representations that survive primarily from Italy. Very clearly two parallel visions lived side by side about the person of the Virgin in Byzantine religious thought and practice: on the one hand likening the Virgin to the empress in texts clearly articulated her great importance in the miracle of the incarnation, her position in the heavenly hierarchy, and her power of protection offered either to the state or individuals all of which was imagined through the lens of imperial regalia and ceremonial practice to offer the highest, most exalted form to such discourse. On the other hand the incomprehensible potency of the Virgin's authority is made clear by not representing her visually in the guise of the earthly empress in Byzantium, thus intentionally creating a paradox or tension in the mind of the faithful about a heavenly queen who in her visual representations lacks the trappings of earthly power and authority yet the lack of such signs do not diminish but rather increase her authority in the Byzantine mind. This capacity to view the Virgin in these competing visions may have been based on the prominence of the Virgin's garment relics in the city of Constantinople, which were understood to be emphatically simple, non-imperial robes.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation explored three distinct, but interconnected realms of images of empresses: ceremonial appearances, pictorial images, and textual representations. Empress in imperial ceremonials were displayed and framed as living images, since imperial figures were expected to emulate effigies through their motionless or highly dignified comportment, stature, and splendid appearance. Pictorial images of Byzantine empresses are exceedingly reticent, highly standardized and stylized abstract representations that are not intended to represent a perception of "reality" in an illusionistic or realistic manner; rather they are cast into such pictorial langue in order to create a distinctive world of the visual image that is in a dynamic dialogue with the wider social and cultural context from which it emerges, and which context also supplies or amplifies its meaning. Images sometimes directly reinforce practices and ideologies manifest in texts and ceremonies, while at other times offer an intentionally divergent message. Textual images of empresses offer the third realm of her representations, also mostly through standardized vocabulary and recycled topoi, yet texts may reveal aspects of the empress's qualities that are intentionally excluded from most ceremonials and all pictorial representations.

The dissertation explored representations of Byzantine empresses through the lens of three thematic chapters and through five chapters devoted to the discussion of the different categories of objects that include representations of empresses. The thematic chapters investigate questions about the role of the empress in Byzantine ceremonials, about the nature and function of Byzantine imperial portraiture, about the physical body and beauty of the empress, and the symbolic significance of imperial garments in Byzantine imperial and religious thought. Through the separate analysis of different categories of objects the specific problems of each genre could be taken into account and new interpretations of certain objects could be offered. Yet the imagery found on the various types of objects is remarkably uniform and with a few notable exceptions, few differences can be established between the iconography and style of images intended for different audiences.

Chapter I explored the role of the empress in imperial ceremonials and delineated the primary characteristics and ideological statements communicated by her public image through an analysis of visual spectacles that defined the identity of the empress and/or provided structure and definition for various social situations through her absence or presence. Particular attention was given to four ceremonies in which the empress had a significant role, namely the arrival of an imperial bride, the imperial marriage, the coronation of the empress, and the birth of an imperial heir. The arrival ceremony unfolded in front of the whole populace of the city, yet women of the court were given a leading role in the greeting and preparations of the new arrival presumably as she was expected to take up her role as the head of the Women's Court immediately upon her arrival or was expected to fill this role eventually. The arrival ceremony stripped the newly arrived woman from her native identity at least at the level of her appearance and customs as it introduced her to the city and the court, while also right away defined her role within Byzantine social hierarchy and power relationships through her immediate integration into the highly stratified world of the Byzantine court and its ceremonials. Imperial marriage and coronation ceremonials were staged in front of the more restricted audience of the imperial court, while the citizens at large were given no glimpse of the bridal couple or the newly crowned empress, but were informed about the celebrations and were encouraged to partake in the festivities outside the walls of the palace. Clearly a distance was cultivated between these rites and the populace at large; in the case of imperial marriages the distance may have served to underscore the truly exceptional character of the imperial union, while in the case of the coronation ceremonial it clearly emphasized the empress's secondary position to the emperor. Marriage ceremonials also incorporate a celebration of the physical beauty and sexuality of the imperial bride and an emphasis on the physical union between two glorious imperial bodies. The coronation ceremonial presented the empress as divinely elected and crowned directly by the hand of god in apparent contradiction to the understanding of the position of the empress defined in law and dramatized through other aspects of the same ceremonial. Although the ceremonials surrounding the birth of an imperial heir lasted for several days and at a distance the whole populace participated in them, the

empress only participated in an audience with court officials and their wives staged in the birth chamber. The presentation of the mother and her newborn to the elite of the court provided witnesses to the imperial birth who could attest to the sacred privilege and legitimacy of the future inheritance of the newborn. In other ceremonials the empress fulfilled her double role either as consort of the emperor or as the head of the Women's Court. The available evidence suggests that the empress may have participated in imperial ceremonials more frequently than usually assumed, and that a strict segregation of imperial ceremonials along gender lines should not be assumed to be the norm. An audience or direct access to the presence of the empress could also define the nature of diplomatic encounters with foreign embassies from the Byzantine viewpoint. Whether present or absent, the empress was mentioned and praised regularly together with the emperor during ceremonials indicating that she was an integral part of what defined the imperial office and hierarchy in the vision of courtiers.

Few images come down to us from the middle Byzantine period that can be directly linked with documented imperial ceremonials. No representations of the Court of Women, or the empress enthroned by herself or by the side of the emperor, or the empress as a mother of a newborn, or imperial processions or imperial banquets that included empresses come down to us. Yet, allusions to the divine election of the empress, imperial marriage, the coronation of the empress, and her motherhood may be recognized in the surviving visual imagery through more and less explicit visual devices and/or through texts accompanying the images.

Chapter II explored the nature of Byzantine imperial portraiture by examining what constitutes a Byzantine imperial portrait, how it was perceived by contemporaries, and addressed questions about its style and function to outline the larger context of the representations of Middle Byzantine empresses. It was necessary to explore these questions in some depth beginning in the early Byzantine period as many of the fundamental characteristics of Byzantine imperial portraiture were forged in this era. While certain shifts had taken place between the early and middle Byzantine periods — most notably the loss of three dimensional portrait sculpture and the introduction of the

beard as a necessary element of effigies of the emperor — other characteristics of early Byzantine imperial portraiture continued in the middle Byzantine period.

A consistent, recognizable portrait type was typically not developed for the representation of individual rulers, and in certain media individual differences were intentionally collapsed into one, virtually identical generic likeness used by several rulers in order to articulate concerns about legitimacy of succession and the vitality of established tradition. Yet in certain situations the visual identity between the ruler and his/her image was of great importance, particularly in monumental images or effigies directly linked with the court. Despite their generic and abstract style and the employment of supra-individual portrait types, imperial effigies were perceived to be life-like by contemporary viewers. Several factors contributed to the development of imperial portraits characterized by only minimal visual reference to individual appearance, and abstract, frontal bodies swallowed up by imperial dress and insignia.

The vacant, idealized facial features may have been derived from the Greco-Roman tradition of images of authority characterized by blank, idealized facial features, while the strictly frontal, emotionless appearance of faces and bodies may reflect imperial ceremonials where the emperor or empress appears as a motionless, distant, image-like entity, and may also signal primary imperial virtues, such as immobility, calmness, moderation. Imperial images of the middle Byzantine period have three, somewhat overlapping functions. They provide legal authority through authenticating the value and validity of coins, weights, and seals. As the image of the emperor in this period is still understood to contain his presence, imperial images are characterized by a type of charismatic authority, and although the cult of imperial images is not attested after the early Byzantine period, imperial images still preserved a sacred potency.

Chapter III examined images of empresses on coins and seals and explored how such representations functioned. Eleven empresses appeared on coins between 780 and 1081, yet for more than half of the period no empresses were visible on the currency. Clearly, the figure of the empress was not considered a necessary element of official numismatic iconography when mature emperors set on the throne, therefore in the middle Byzantine period effigies of empresses were used less frequently than was customary in

the 4-5th centuries. Empresses appeared on the coinage when the political circumstances demanded this and their images typically did not appear alone but in the company of imperial colleagues. Coins were only struck in the names of empresses who reigned independently in the Middle Byzantine period and they were the only imperial women who appeared on the coinage without colleagues. While the appearance of empresses on coins may have emerged from a series of dynastic crises or moments of political vacuum at the apex of society, the presence of empresses on coins should not be interpreted as direct signals of political turmoil, as numismatic images of empresses could communicate important statements to the public about iconophile orthodoxy and the legal standing of the widowed mother.

Seven empresses of the middle Byzantine period left behind seals, among them one for whom no coinage was minted. Seals of empresses shared the iconography of coins and were likely produced in the same workshops. Despite their smaller numbers and less public use, seals of empresses retain the same iconography and style used on coins, thus demonstrating little personal choice in selecting their imagery.

The empresses Irene forged the numismatic and sphragistic representation of empresses of the eighth through the eleventh centuries. While the representations of empresses on coins and seals are highly conservative in their style and iconography and furnish us with a rather reticent imagery, subtle changes signify important shifts in messages. The imagery of coins and seals acquires more complex meanings through the comparisons and contrasts between representations of empresses and male imperial predecessors, as well as through the continuity of the visual tradition between empresses and the introduction of slight yet significant adjustments in the representation of the female imperial figure. The intended messages of coins and seals is further broadened by the type accompanying the effigy of the empress on the other side; the presence of Christ on a coin or seal of an empress typically articulates that she is in possession of the executive imperial power, while representations of the Virgin link imperial women with the important, state sponsored shrine of the Blachernai and the various icons it housed. Evidence for a more personal devotion can only be detected on the coins of Zoe and Theodora, who introduce new numismatic types onto their coins, the image of Christ

Antiphonites and the Virgin with the hovering medallion on her chest, as a result of personal devotion.

Chapter IV examined representations of empresses in monumental images that survive or are known from textual sources and hypothesized about further monumental images representing empresses that may have been produced. Monumental images with representations of empresses survive or are attested in the imperial palace and in churches and they never show the empress by herself but rather in the company of her husband or together with her family emphasizing their roles as wives and mothers and underscoring their association with and dependence on the emperor. Churches and monasteries likely contained further representations of empresses as their founders or donors, the palace may have included many images of empresses no longer extant, and representations of the two sanctified empresses Theodora and Theophano may have been found in various locations in Constantinople.

Chapter V explored two ivory objects containing representations of empresses, the David Casket and the Romanos Ivory. An examination of their controversial dates confirmed the suggestion that the David Casket can be linked most convincingly with Basil I (867-886) and offered new observations about the biographical references contained in the David cycle of the casket. The analysis of the Romanos Ivory corroborated its dating to the tenth century and suggested that it may have been used as a personal memorial or souvenir by the young emperor Romanos. An exploration of the imagery of the double coronation found on both ivories and on a series of other objects and monuments of the middle Byzantine period offered conclusions about the significance of this pervasive iconographic type of middle Byzantine imperial art, suggesting that the imagery had an intentionally vague visual language whose meaning could be specified by the particular circumstances of its use and by the texts that accompanied such representations. The extant evidence suggests that this iconography might have originally been aimed at an audience of the select few (such as courtiers, imperial family members and relatives), as suggested by the types of luxury objects that carry this imagery; even the monumental representations of the double coronation scene appear to have been located in semi-private contexts of monastic churches, and would

likely have had a limited audience. Not until the reign of Eudokia Makrembolitissa in the late eleventh century do we have evidence for the use of the double coronation iconography in a wider context, when the image is placed on the widely circulating coinage.

Chapter VI investigated images of empresses on metal-works most likely all produced in Constantinople. Given the stylistic connections between the surviving objects, it is possible that they were produced in two workshops of the capital. These objects maintain strong links with traditional iconography found in other media through the double coronation scene that appears on three of the five works, an iconographic theme also popular on other luxury objects. Two objects, the Monomachos Crown and the Empress Roundels, however, represent unique iconographic sets and are both linked with the court of the purple-born sisters Zoe and Theodora, yet both of these objects can be well-integrated into the visual and textual manifestations of imperial ideology and pictorial practice known from the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Chapter VII studied representations of empresses in manuscript illuminations. One of the primary concerns of representations of empresses in surviving Byzantine manuscripts is the visual expression of the role of the empress in establishing and maintaining the ruling dynasty, thus empresses appear as members of family portraits often including children in these representations (as in the Paris gr. 510, Paris gr. 922, Barberini 372). In these family portraits the empress is presented as a vital link between the emperor and his designated heir(s) and she embodies dynastic hopes and the strength and legitimacy of the dynasty as it is through her fertile body that the succession is ensured. These family portraits also present emperor and empress as equal partners whose rule is divinely sanctioned further enhancing the importance of the empress and the prestige of the designated heirs. A somewhat different conception of dynastic continuity is articulated in the family portrait in Sinai gr. 364, where the emperor is flanked by his wife and her sister, the last surviving members of the Macedonian house. The image upholds the legitimacy and prestige of the Macedonian line and presents the emperor as a protector of this lineage thereby legitimizing his rule. In the imperial portrait cycle of the Coislin 79 the emphasis is on the nature of imperial power, rather

than dynastic concerns. In one representation the empress is portrayed in her role as a divinely sanctioned consort equal to her husband, however, this view of the role of the empress is in direct competition with another image in the same manuscript that represents the emperor within his court hierarchy leaving no room for the empress. In this cycle two competing visions about the nature of the imperial office and official hierarchy are placed side-by-side.

Representations of empresses in manuscripts may also be linked with claims of orthodoxy and proper doctrine that helped to legitimize the ruling emperor and his dynasty. In images illuminating the Paris Gr. 510, the emerging Macedonian Dynasty linked its rule with female authority and orthodoxy through the person of Helena, the discoverer of the True Cross, and with orthodox rule through Constantine, the first Christian emperor. Moreover, the portrayal of Helena as a personification of Easter Sunday further enhanced the linkage between imperial authority and Christian triumph. The Menologion of Basil II included two recently canonized female imperial saints, Theodora and Theophano. Their representations reflect dynastic concerns of a different sort than those found in imperial family portraits; here dynastic legitimacy is linked with the promotion of orthodox female saints from members of the ruling and preceding dynasty. Visual images of empresses as allegorical figures only survive in manuscripts. Such representations are linked with the Greco-Roman tradition of female personifications yet are infused with specifically Christian messages that reflect back and characterize the imperial office.

Chapter VIII investigated the significance of the physical beauty attributed to empresses in both texts and images, explored the meanings inscribed onto the physical body of the empress in texts and images in various contexts, and considered the importance of garments in representations of empresses, as well as the correlations between empresses and the Virgin clad in imperial robes, raising questions about the connections between imperial ideology and female sanctity.

Discussions about the beauty of the empress provided an acceptable framework within which the growing importance of empresses of the late 8th and 9th centuries could be presented. The physical body of the empress was perceived and rendered in two

strikingly different ways in Byzantine images, texts, and ceremonials. Images and certain texts represented the body of the empress as a non-sexual, non-physical being conveying a vision of the imperial office as a divinely inspired eternal entity. Other ceremonials and texts, however, projected a more corporeal view of the empress's body that included her sexual allure and fertility, infirmity, and even mortality. Clearly, the public image of the empress incorporated a positive vision of her physical force and sexual potency that helped to articulate dynastic concerns and might also reflected the increased significance of the status of the institution of marriage, which became a sacrament in the tenth century. A corporeal view of the empress's body also helped to forge a view of the empress in the Byzantine mind that traversed the physical and ideological gap between the ruling family and the populace.

Imperial garments were essential visual signifiers of imperial identity, and as has been shown, on occasion garments were allowed to bestow imperial identity on their wearers even before ceremonials would have transformed a non-imperial person to an imperial one. Imperial vestments were conceived of as sacred, relic-like objects and embodied a unique connection between the Byzantine emperor and God. From the imperial garments the *loros* dress became the most popular attire of the middle Byzantine period, rendering this garment a means of perpetuating imperial memory. Further, the employment of the nearly identical *loros* dress for images of emperors and empresses also underscored that the empress was a divinely elected consort who embodied the desirable order of the state and its hierarchy. Imperial garments were also bestowed on the Virgin in Byzantine texts, and in early medieval representations in Italy. Two parallel visions lived side by side about the person of the Virgin in Byzantine religious thought and practice: on the one hand likening the Virgin to the empress in texts articulated her great importance in the miracle of the incarnation, her position in the heavenly hierarchy, and her power of protection offered either to the state or individuals. All of this imagined through the lens of imperial regalia and ceremonial practice offered the highest, most exalted form to verbal representations of the Mother of God. On the other hand the incomprehensible potency of the Virgin's authority is made clear by not representing her in the guise of the earthly empress in Byzantine visual images, thus intentionally creating

a paradox or tension in the mind of the faithful about a heavenly queen who in her visual representations lacks the trappings of earthly power yet the lack of such signs do not diminish but rather increase her authority in the Byzantine mind. The capacity to view the Virgin in these competing visions may have been based on the prominence of the Virgin's garment relics in the city of Constantinople, which were understood to be emphatically simple, non-imperial robes.

Through the investigation of the portraits of Byzantine empresses in the period 780 to 1081 the role of the imperial image in Byzantine society was placed into sharper focus, and conclusions about the unique functions ascribed to images of empresses have been offered. A visual culture emerges from this exploration of the ceremonial, visual, and textual representations of empress that is intensely engaged with the notion of the image, and places high prize on being like an image; images permeate the world of real life, if one may apply this expression to highly choreographed imperial ceremonials, as well as the world of the imagination, while pictorial images remain distinctly removed from the mundane qualities and actualities of common experience.

A striking feature of the visual representation of empresses in the middle Byzantine period is the virtual lack of independent iconography of the empress; she almost never appears by herself but rather is integrated into a larger composition that includes her husband and/or her children. The pictorial imagery within which empresses appear also has a limited range in comparison to the iconographic types available to emperors. No specifically feminine, independent imperial imagery was developed that elevated important roles and aspects of the uniquely feminine imperial experience (such as motherhood, or scenes from the life of the female court). Rather, images of empresses were integrated into the male iconography and empresses to a certain degree served as attributes, personifications along the side of the emperor and within the image of the imperial family.

FIGURES



Fig. 1. Foreign Princess Arrives at Constantinople for Her Wedding, Vatican gr. 1851, f. 3v



Fig. 2. Meeting of the Two Princesses, Vatican gr. 1851, f. 6r



Fig. 3. Matthew and John Chrysostom, Sinai gr. 364, f. 2v



Fig. 4. Solidus of Leo VI



Fig. 5. The Virgin Crowns Leo VI, ivory, Berlin



Fig. 6. Solidus of Constantine VII



Fig. 7. Follis of Romanos I



Fig. 8. Histamenon of Constantine IX



Fig. 10. Histamenon of Michael IV



Fig. 9. Tetarteron of Romanos III



Fig. 11. Anonymous follis



Fig. 12. Two-solidus gold medallion of Helena



Fig. 13. Bronze medallion of Helena



Fig. 14. Two-solidus medallion of Fausta



Fig. 15. Solidus of Fausta



Fig. 16. Solidus of Flacilla



Fig. 18. Solidus of Eudocia



Fig. 17. Solidus of Eudoxia



Fig. 19. Solidus of Licinia Eudoxia



Fig. 20. Solidus of Theodosius II





Fig. 21. Follis of Justin II



Fig. 22. Solidus of Irene and Constantine VI



Fig. 23. Solidus of Leo IV and Constantine VI

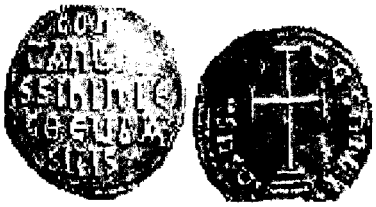


Fig. 24. Milaresion of Irene and Constantine VI

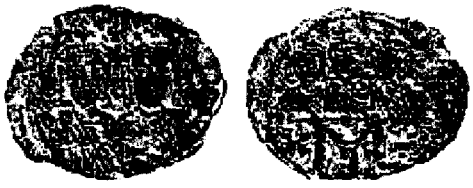


Fig. 25. Follis of Constantine VI and Irene





Fig. 26. Solidus of Constantine VI and Irene

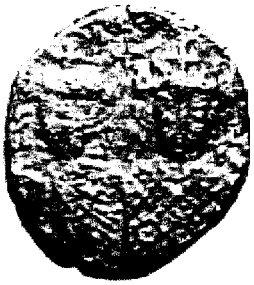




Fig. 27. Follis of Constantine VI and Irene



Fig. 28. Solidus of Constantine VI and Irene

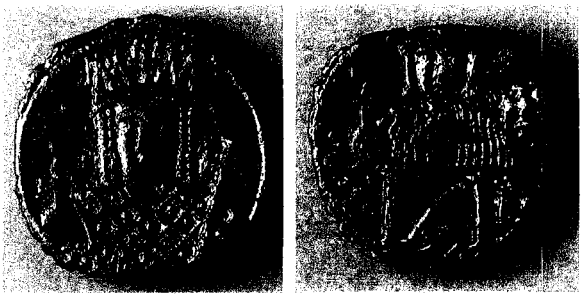


Fig. 29. Follis of Constantine VI and Irene

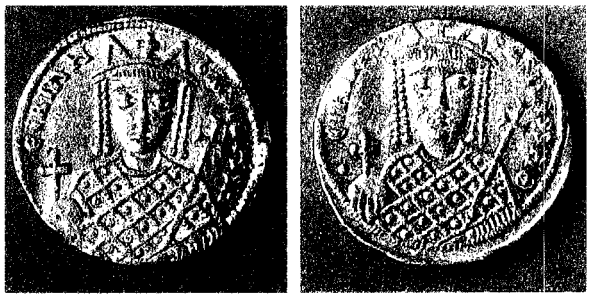


Fig. 30. Solidus of Irene



Fig. 31. Solidus of Constantine V



Fig. 32. Follis of Irene



Fig. 33. Lead seal of Constantine VI



Fig. 34. Lead seal of Anthimios with busts of Constantine VI and Irene



Fig. 35. Lead seal of Irene



Fig. 36. Lead token of Irene



Fig. 37. Lead seal of imperial kommerkia in Thrace(?) with bust of Irene



Fig. 38. Solidus of Theophilos



Fig. 39. Solidi of Michael III and Theodora



Fig. 40. Solidus of Michael III and Theodora



Fig. 41. Lead seal of Theodora with bust of Theophilos



Fig. 42. Lead seal of Theodora and Michael III



Fig. 43. Lead seal of Theodora and Michael III

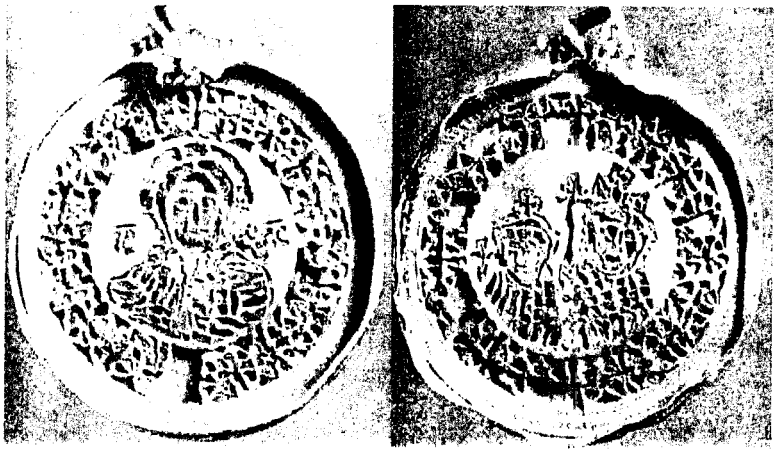
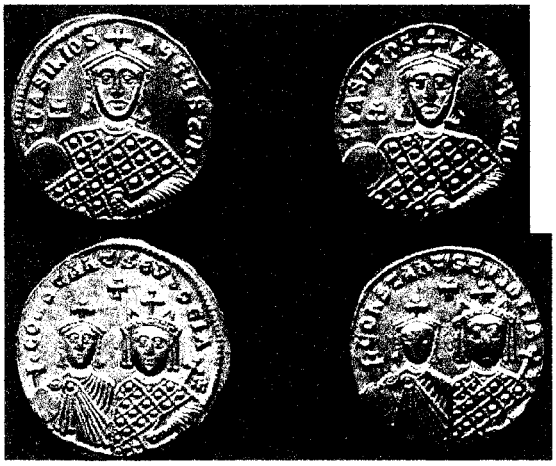


Fig. 44. Gold pendant with busts of empress and her son



45. Solidi of Basil I with Constantine and Eudokia Ingerina





Fig. 46. Solidus of Constantine VII and Zoe Carbonopsina





Fig. 47. Silver pattern coin of Constantine VII and Zoe Carbonopsina



Fig. 48. Lead token of Constantine VII and Zoe Carbonopsina



Fig. 49. Solidus of Leo VI and Constantine VII



Fig. 50. Follis of Constantine VII and Zoe



Fig. 51. Lead seal of Constantine VII and Zoe



Fig. 52. Lead seal of Constantine VII and Zoe

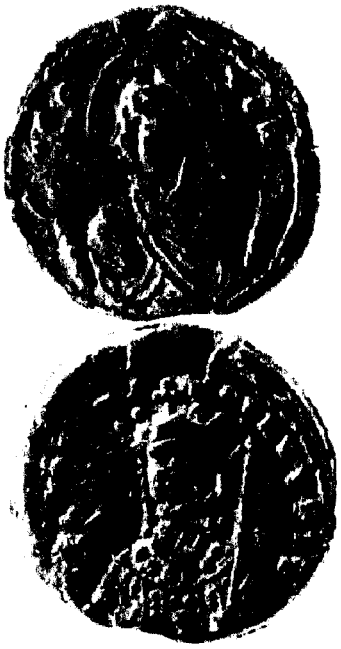


Fig. 53. Lead seal of Anastasia-Theophano



Fig. 54. Follis or histamenon pattern of Zoe Porphyrogenneta

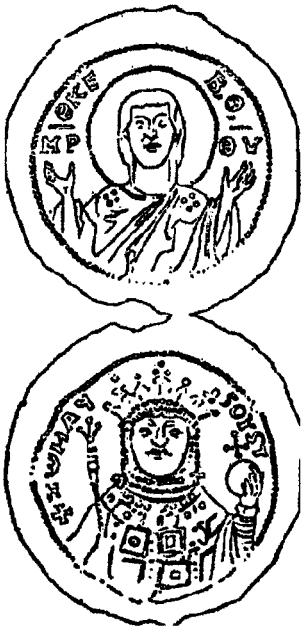


Fig. 56. Drawing of alleged pattern milaresion of Zoe Porphyrogenneta



Fig. 55. Follis of pattern tetarteron of Zoe Porphyrogenneta



Fig. 57. Lead seal of Zoe Porphyrogenneta

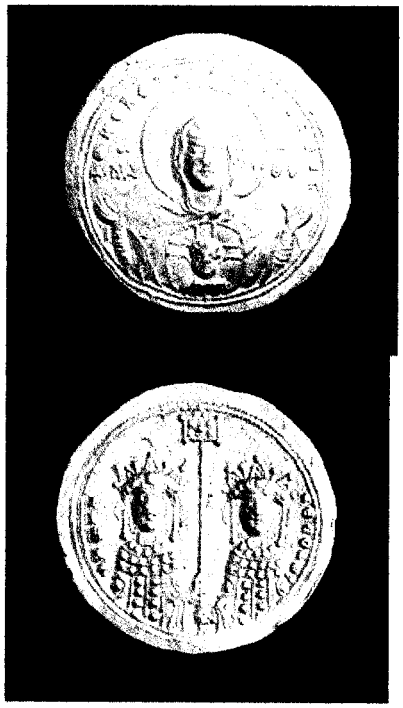


Fig. 58. Histamenon of Zoe and Theodora



Fig. 59. Histamenon of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



Fig. 60. Tetarteron of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



Fig. 61. Two-thirds milaresion of Theoodra Porphyrogenneta



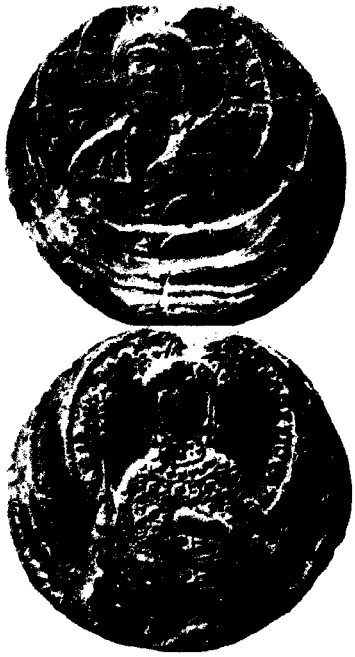
Fig. 62. Silver weight of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



64. Lead seal of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



Fig. 63. Four-solidus gold bulla of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



65. Lead seal of Theodora Porphyrogenneta



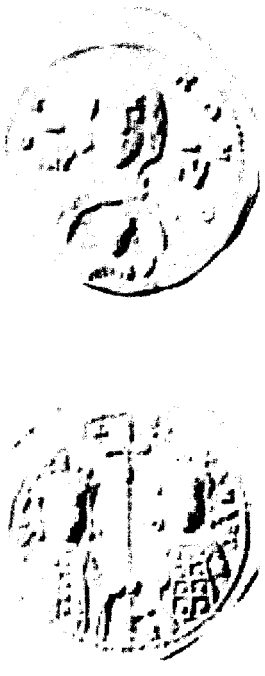
Fig. 66. Milaresion of Constantine X and Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 68. Histamenon of Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 67. Follis of Constantine X and Eudokia Makrembolitissa



69. Tetarteron of Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 70. Lead seal of Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 71. Lead seal of Eudokia Makrembolitissa

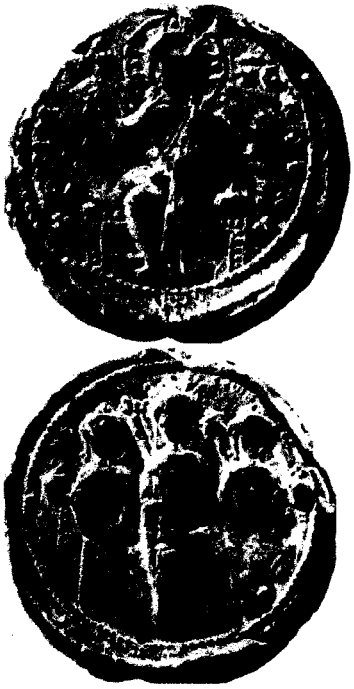


Fig. 72. Lead seal of Eudokia Makrembolitissa

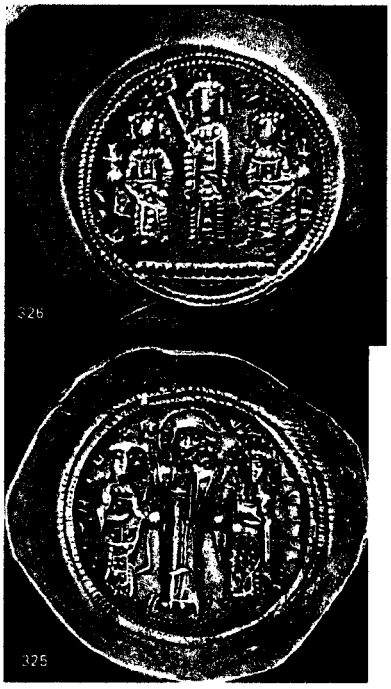


Fig. 74. Histamenon of Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 74. Tetarteron of Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 75. Lead seal of Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa

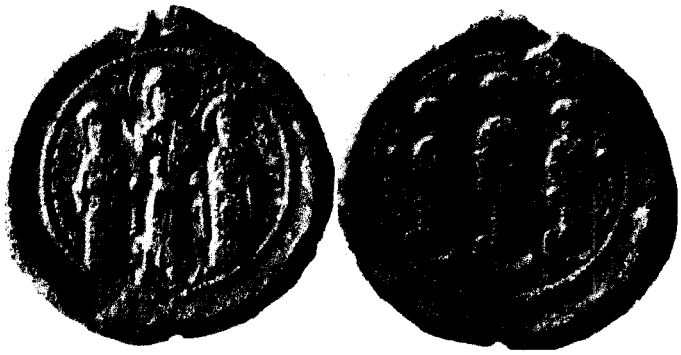


Fig. 76. Lead seal of Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa



Fig. 77. Tetarteron of Michael VII and Maria of Alania



Fig. 79. Two-thirds milaresion of Michael VII and Maria of Alania





Fig. 78. Milaresion of Michael VII and Maria of Alania





Fig. 80. Milaresion of Nikephoros Phokas and Maria of Alania



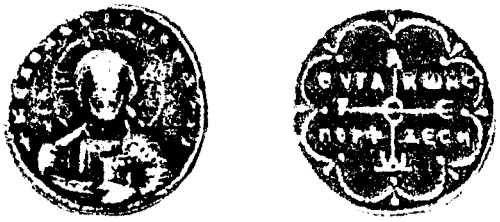
Fig. 81. Lead seal of Theoktiste, ca. 830



Fig. 82. Lead seal of Maria, ca. 959-969



Fig. 83. Lead seal of Maria, second half of 9th or first quarter of the 10th century



84. Copper token of Theodora, daughter of the emperor Constantine 945-969 or first half of 11th century

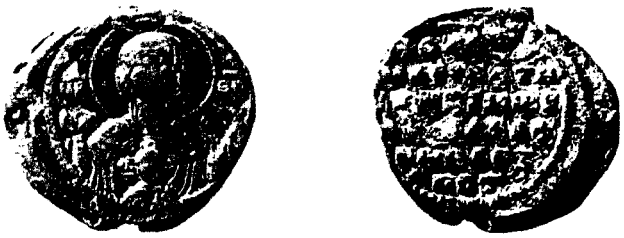


Fig. 85. Lead seal of Maria, sister of the emperor Constantine, 1042-1067



Fig. 86. Justinian and Retinue, San Vitale, Ravenna



Fig. 87. Theodora and Retinue, San Vitale, Ravenna



Fig. 88. Constantine Monomachos and Zoe Porphyrogenneta with Christ, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

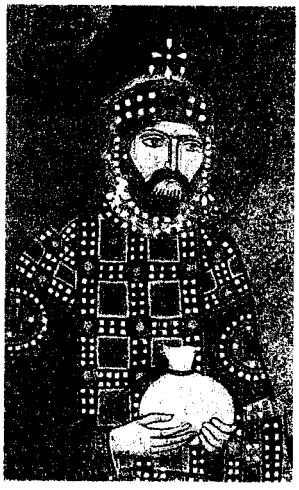


Fig. 89. Constantine Monomachos, detail of Fig. 88

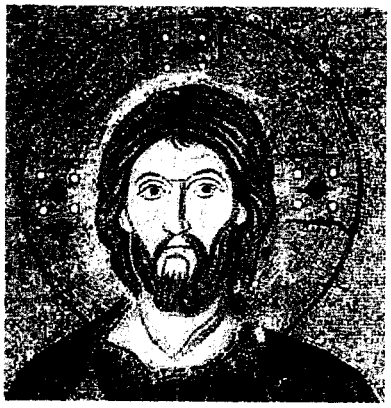


Fig. 90. Christ, detail of Fig. 88



Fig. 91. Zoe Porphyrogenneta, detail of Fig. 88

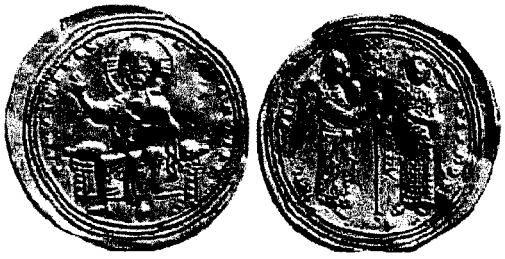


Fig. 92. Histamenon of Michael IV

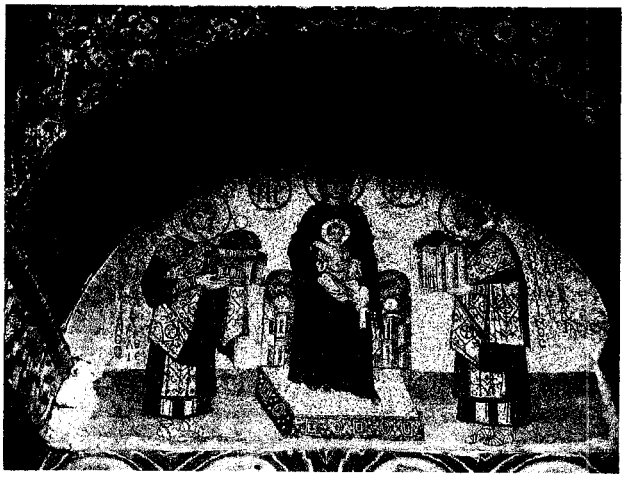


Fig. 93. Justinian and Constantine with the Virgin, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

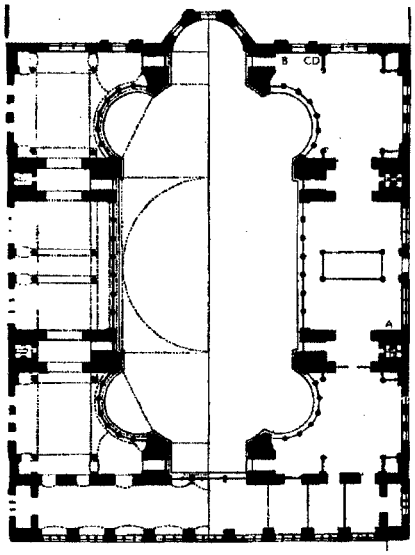


Fig. 94. Ground plan of the gallery level of Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

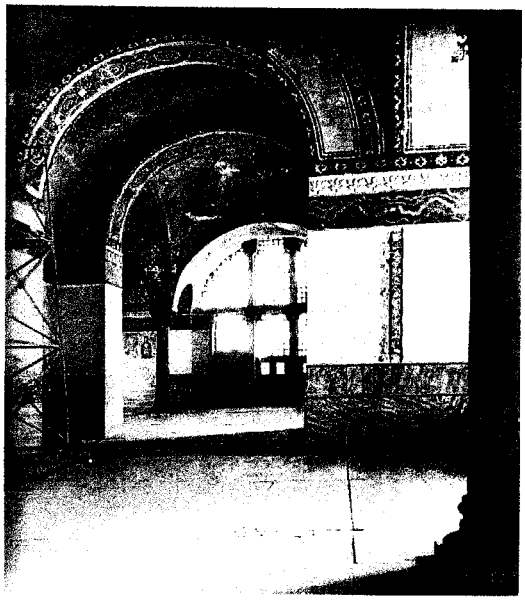


Fig. 95. View from the patriarchal metatorion towards the imperial lodge, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople



Fig. 96. John II Komnenos and Irene with the Virgin, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople

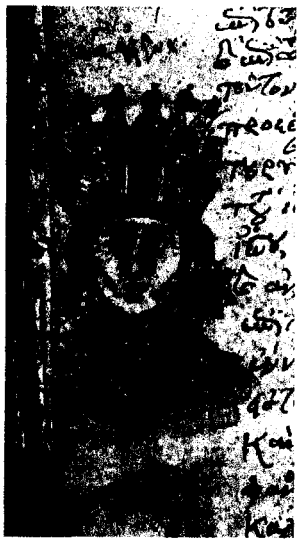


Fig. 97. Helena, Modena gr. 122



Fig. 99. Zoe Porphyrogenneta, Modena gr. 122

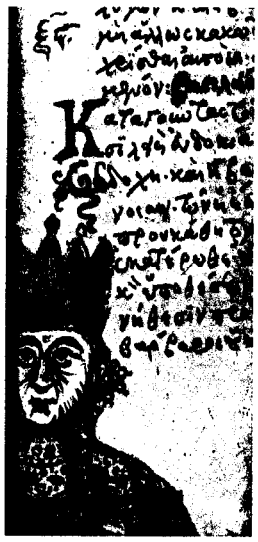


Fig. 101. Eudokia Makrembolitissa, Modena gr. 122



Fig. 98. Pulcheria, Modena gr. 122



Fig. 100. Theodora Porphyrogenneta, Modena gr. 122



Fig. 102. Maria of Alania and her son, Mount Papikion



Fig. 103. Fragment of the head of Maria of Alania, Mount Papikion



Fig. 104. View of the north wall and north side apse, Pigeon House church, Çavuşin



Fig. 105. Drawing of the view of the north wall and side apse, Pigeon House church, Çavuşin

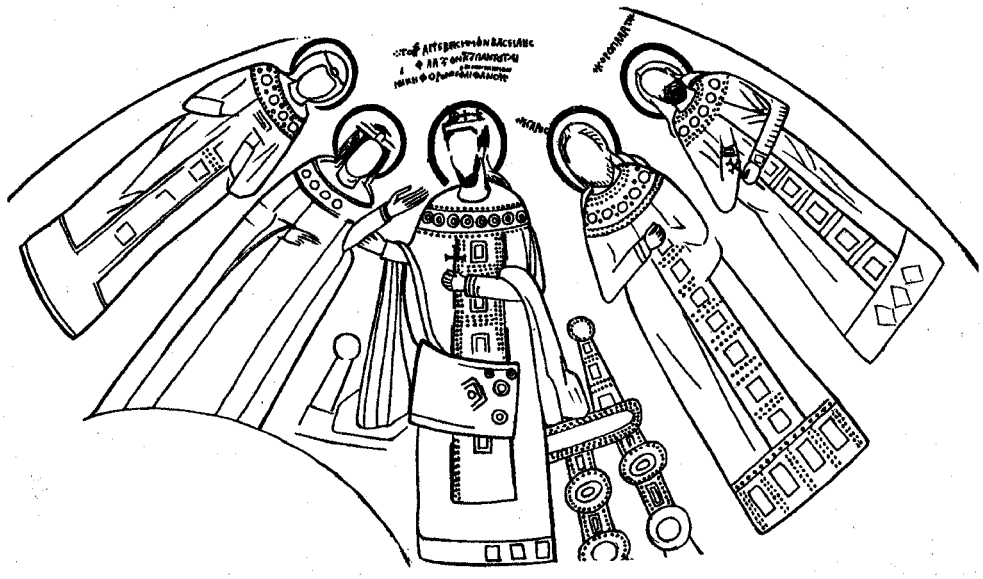


Fig. 106. Drawing of Nikephoros Phokas, Theophano and imperial family members, north side apse, Pigeon House church, Çavuşin



Fig. 107. Constantine and Helena, main apse, Pigeon House church, Çavuşin

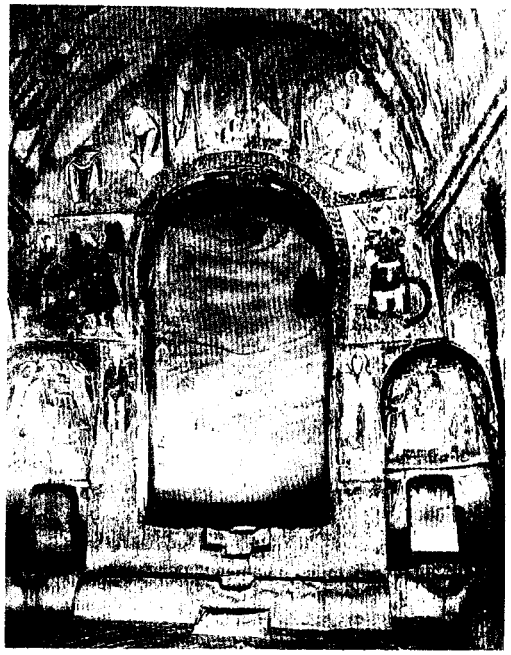


Fig. 108. View towards the apse, Pigeon House church, Çavuşin

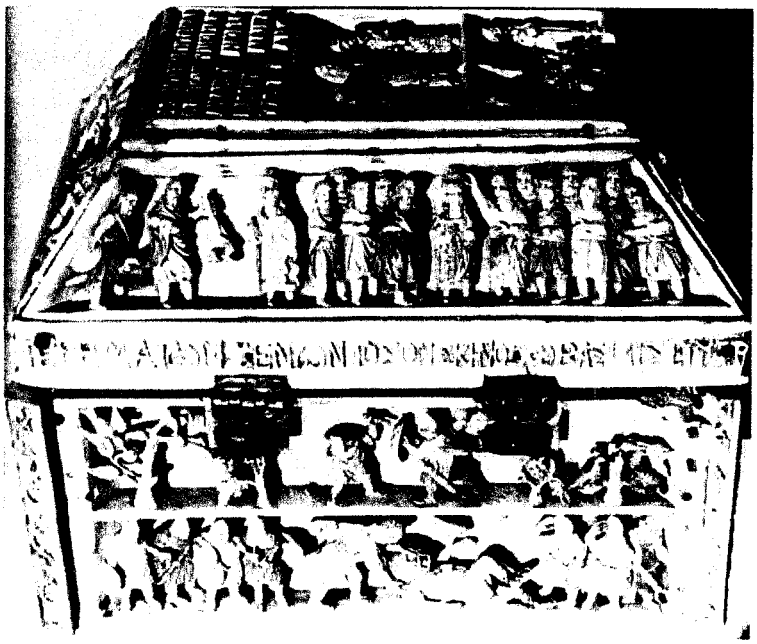


Fig. 109. David Casket, Palazzo Venezia, Rome

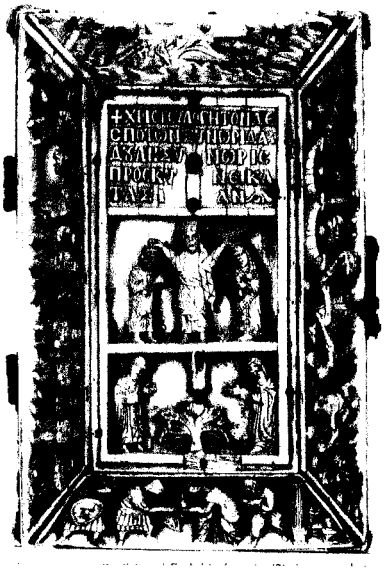


Fig. 110. David Casket, lid



Fig. 111. David Casket, short side



Fig. 112. David Casket, long side

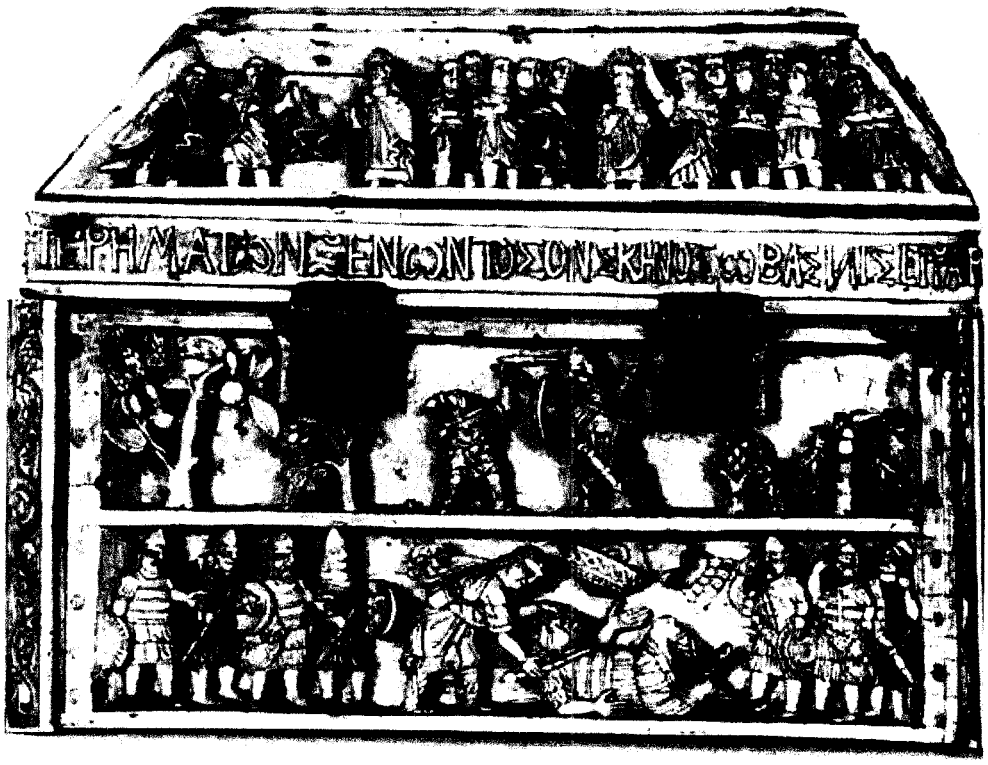


Fig. 113. David Casket, Long side



Fig. 114. David Casket, Short side

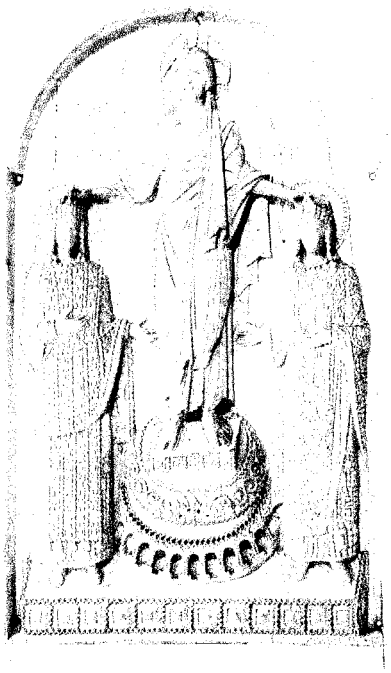


Fig. 115. Romanos Ivory, Bibliothèque National, Paris

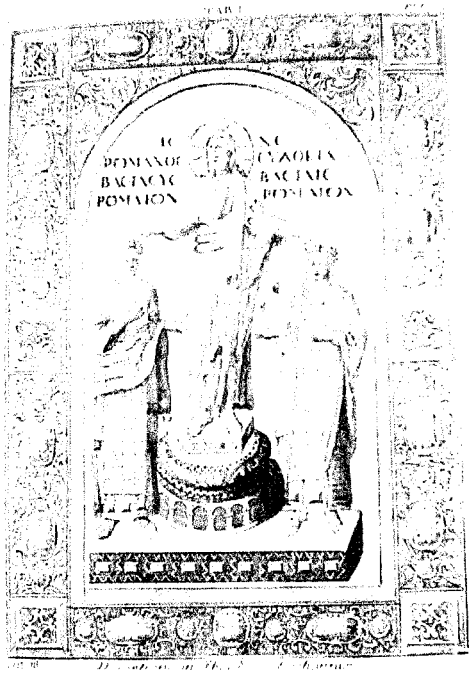


Fig. 116. Print of Gospel Book cover with Romanos Ivory, Besancon

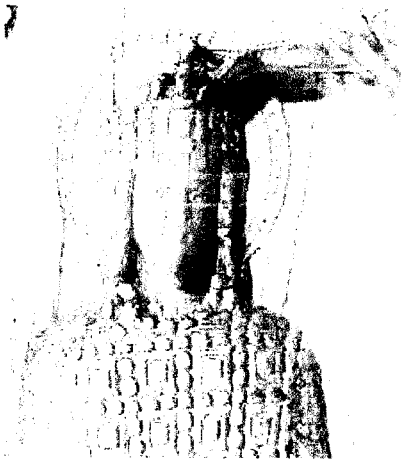


Fig. 117. Face of Romanos, detail of Fig. 115



Fig. 118. Face of Christ, detail of Fig. 115



Fig. 119. Face of Eudokia, detail of Fig. 115



Fig. 120. Icon with St. John the Theologian and St. Paul, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Berlin

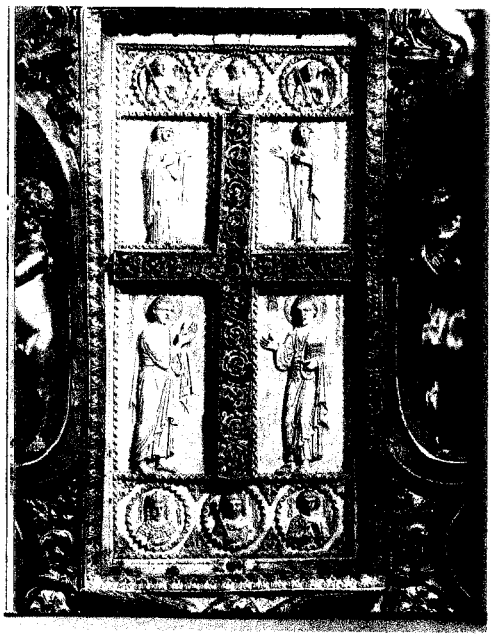


Fig. 121. Reliquary of the True Cross, S. Francesco, Cortona



Fig. 122. Constantine and Helena, detail of Fig. 121



Fig. 123. Christ blesses Otto and Theophano, Paris

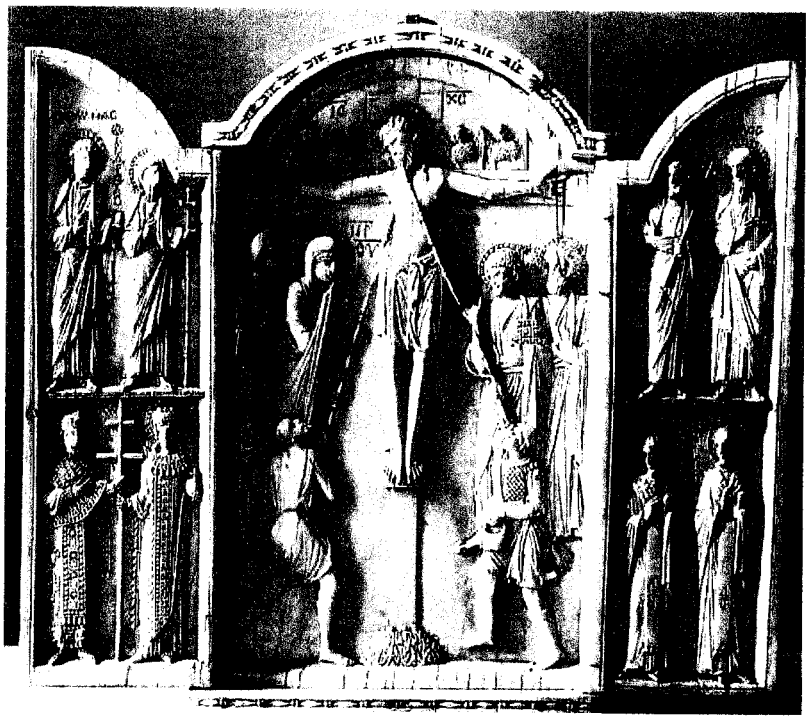


Fig. 124. The crucifixion and saints, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

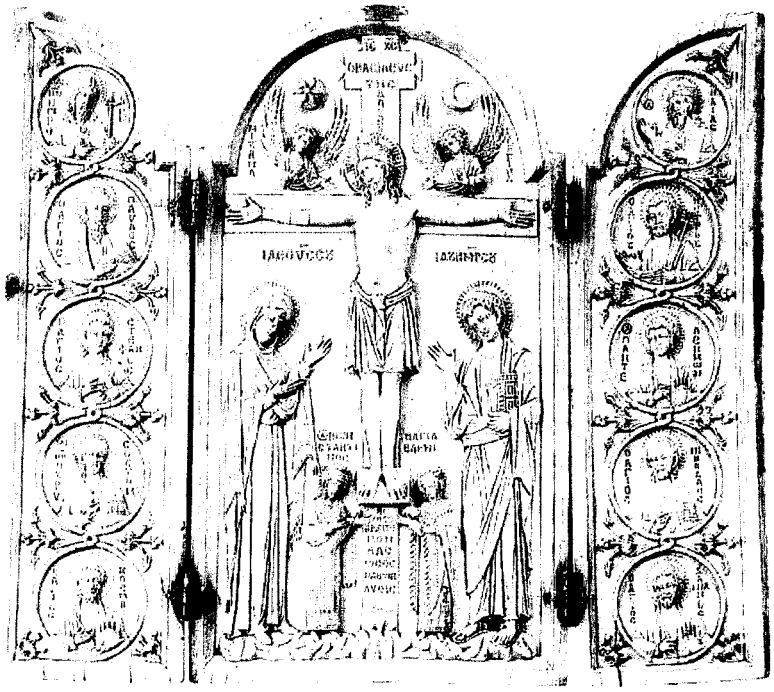


Fig. 125. The crucifixion and saints, Bibliothèque National, Paris



Fig. 126. Roundel with the bust of Zoe, Treasury of San Marco, Venice



Fig. 127. Crown of Constantine Monomachos, Hungarian National Museum, Budapest



Fig. 128. Empress Zoe, detail of Fig. 127



Fig. 129. Constantine Monomachos, detail of Fig. 127



Fig. 130. Empress Theodora, detail of Fig. 127



131. Dancing girl in green top, detail of Fig. 127



Fig. 132. Dancing girl in white top, detail of Fig. 127



133. Dancing girl, Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Fig. 134. Tapeinosis, detail of Fig. 127



Fig. 135. Aletheia, detail of Fig. 127

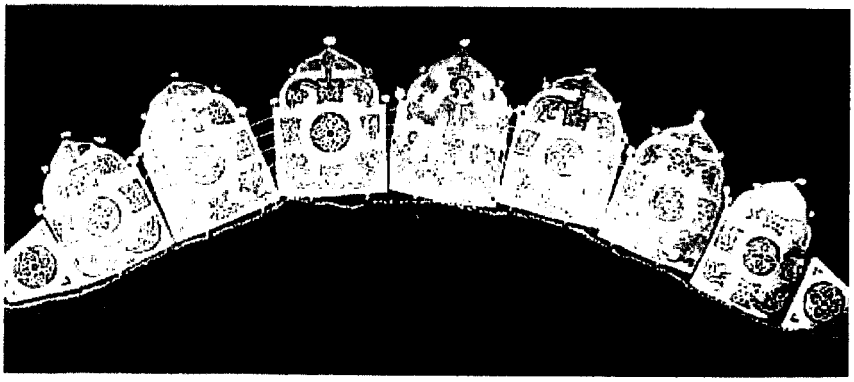


Fig. 136. Diadem from Kiev

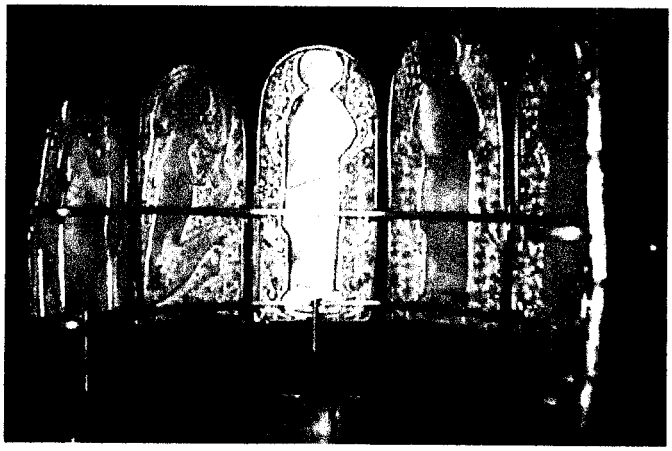


Fig. 137. Back view of the Crown of Constantine Monomachos

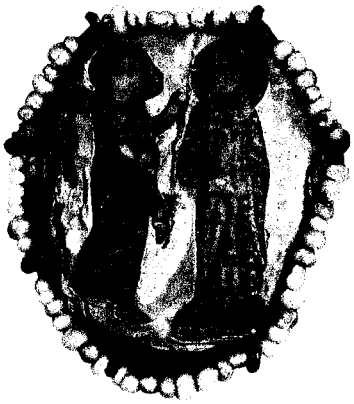


Fig. 138. Archangel Gabriel greets an empress, Kakhuli Triptych, Tbilisi

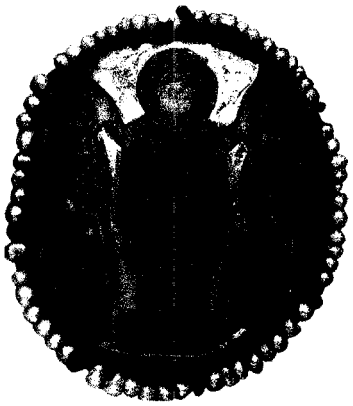


Fig. 139. Two empresses blessed by the Virgin, Kakhuli Triptych, Tbilisi



Fig. 140. St. John the Baptist greets an empress, Kakhuli Triptych, Tbilisi

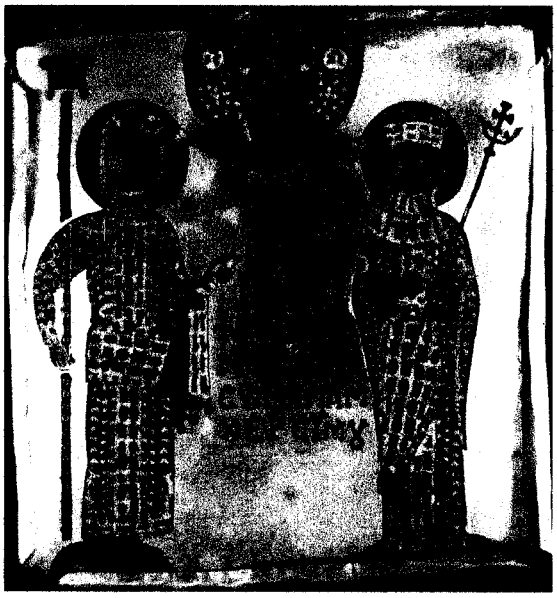


Fig. 141. Michael VII Doukas and Maria of Alania blessed by Christ, Kakhuli Triptych, Tbilisi

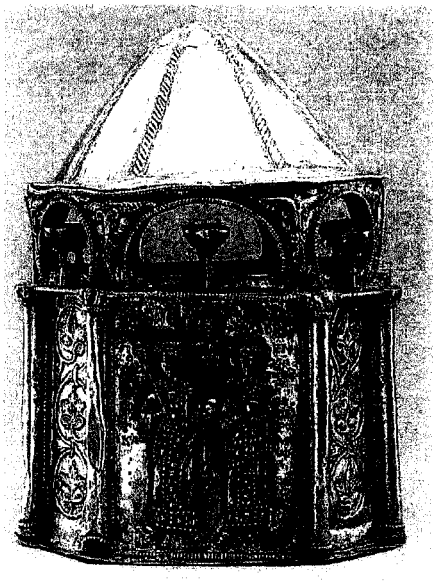


Fig. 142. Reliquary of St. Demetrios, Constantine X and Eudokia Makrembolitissa, State Historical and Cultural Museum, Kremlin, Moscow

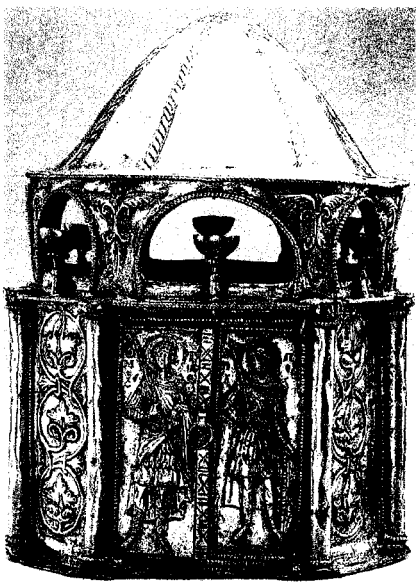


Fig. 143. Reliquary of St. Demetrios, St. Nestorios and St. Loupos



Fig. 144. Reliquary of St. Demetrios, inscription



Fig. 145. Reliquary of St. Demetrios, inscription



Fig. 146. Basil I with Elijah and Gabriel, Paris gr. 510



Fig. 147. Eudokia with Leo and Alexander, Paris gr. 510



Fig. 148. Cross page, Paris gr. 510



Fig. 149. Cross page, Paris gr. 510



Fig. 150. Under-drawing on cross page, detail of Fig. 148



Fig. 151. Vision of Habakukk, Paris gr. 510

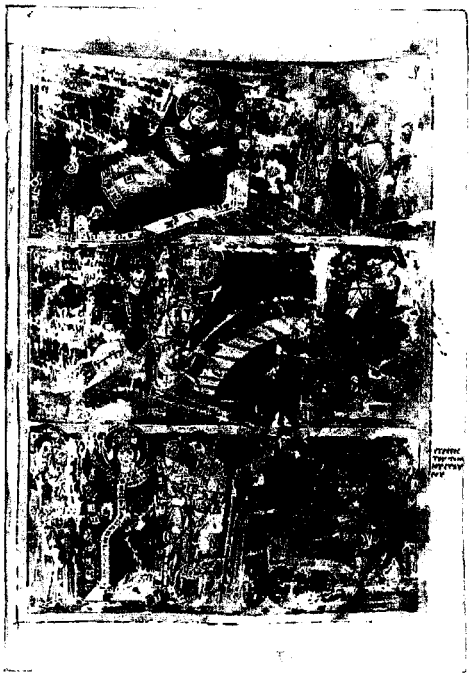


Fig. 152. Constantine's Dream, Battle at the Milvian Bridge, Finding of the True Cross, Paris gr. 510

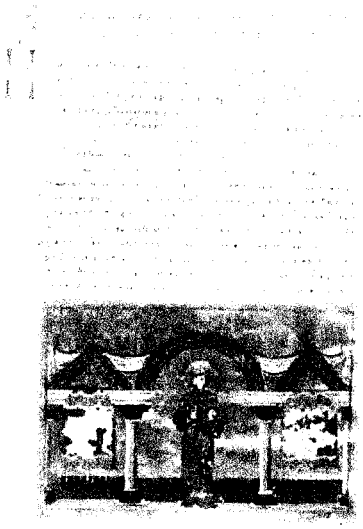


Fig. 153. St. Theodora, Menologion of Basil II, Vatican gr. 1613



Fig. 154, detail of Fig. 153

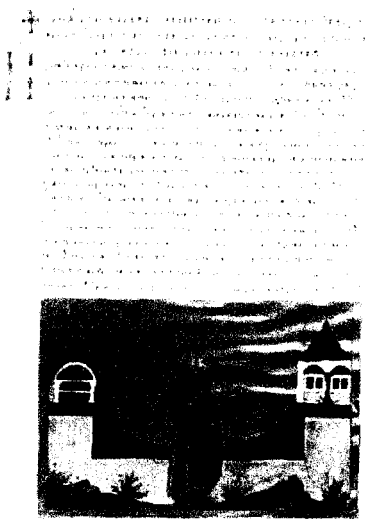


Fig. 155. St. Theophano, Menologion of Basil II, Vatican gr. 1613



Fig. 156, detail of Fig. 155



Fig. 157. Basil II triumphing over enemies, Psalter of Basil II, Biblioteca Marciana gr. z17, Venice



Fig. 158. St. Theophano, glass cameo, Dumbaton Oaks and Whittemore Collection, Washington, DC

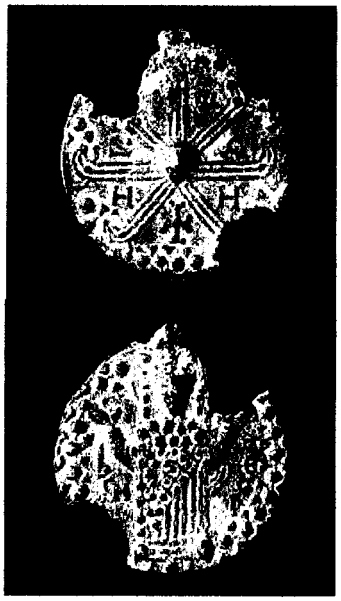


Fig. 159. Hystera amulet with St. Theophano, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge

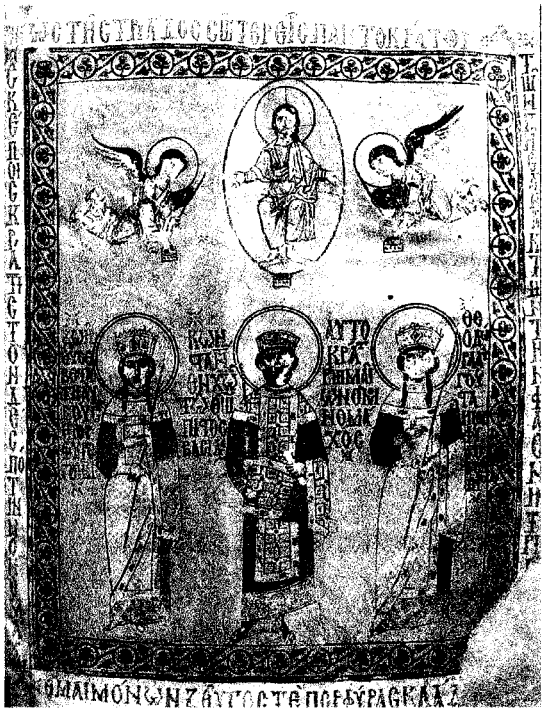


Fig. 160. Zoe, Constantine Monomachos and Theodora, Sinai gr. 364



Fig. 161. Michael, Constantine X, Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Costantine, Paris gr. 922



Fig. 162. Monk Sabbas offers his codex to the emperor, Coislin 79, Paris



Fig. 163. Michael VII (Nikephoros Botaniates) and Maria of Alania blessed by Christ, Coislin 79, Paris



Fig. 164. Michael VII (Nikephoros Botaniates) enthroned, Coislin 79, Paris



Fig. 165. St. John Chrysostom offers his homilies to the emperor in the presence of Michael, Coislin 79, Paris



Fig. 166. Michael VII, Maria and Constantine, Leningrad gr. 214



Fig. 167. Michael VII and Maria, Leningrad gr. 214



Fig. 168. Imperial family, Barberini gr. 372, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome

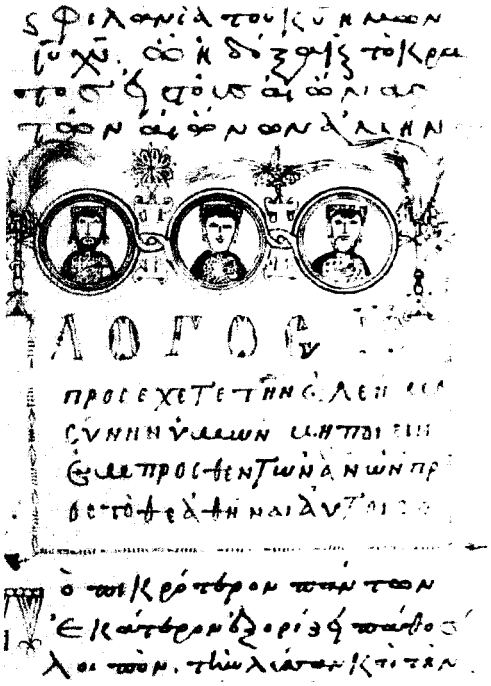


Fig. 169. Busts of three emperors, Princeton Garrett 14



Fig. 170. Almsgiving, Chludov Psalter, Moscow



Fig. 171. Almsgiving, Chludov Psalter, Moscow



Fig. 172. Almsgiving, Theodore Psalter, London



Fig. 173. Almsgiving empress, Barberini gr. 372, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome



Fig. 175. Imperial portrait, Urb. gr. 2, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome



Fig. 174. Almsgiving emperor, Barberini gr. 372, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome



Fig. 176. Almsgiving as empress, Urb. gr. 2, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome

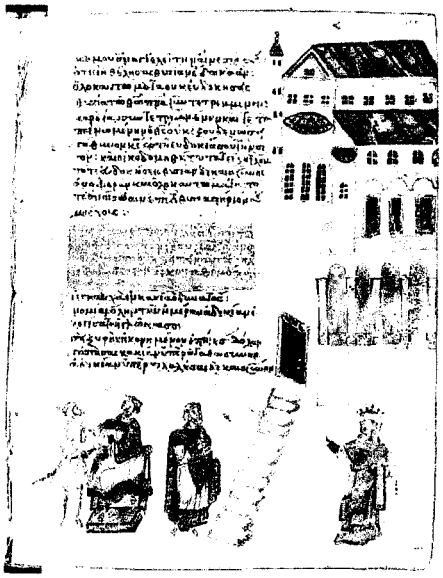


Fig. 177. Sion, Chludov Psalter, Moscow



Fig. 179. Empire of the Christians, Barberini gr. 372, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

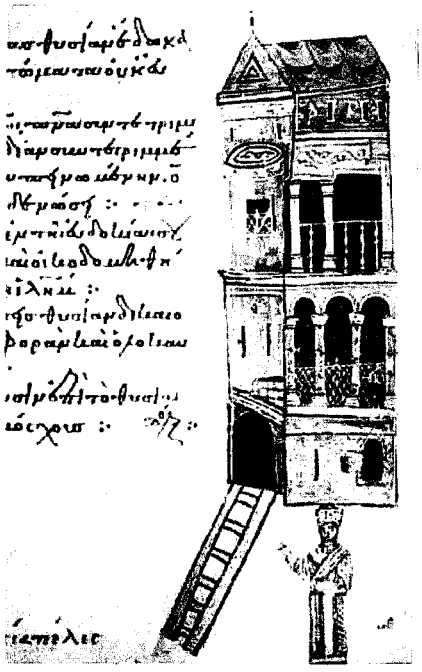


Fig. 178. The Holy City, Barberini gr. 372, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana



Fig. 180. Personifications of the Season of Spring and New Sunday, Paris Coislin 239



Fig. 181. Coin of Faustina



Fig. 182. Maria Regina, St. Maria Antiqua, Rome



Fig. 183. Maria Regina, San Marco, Florence



Fig. 184. Maria Regina, detail of Fig. 183

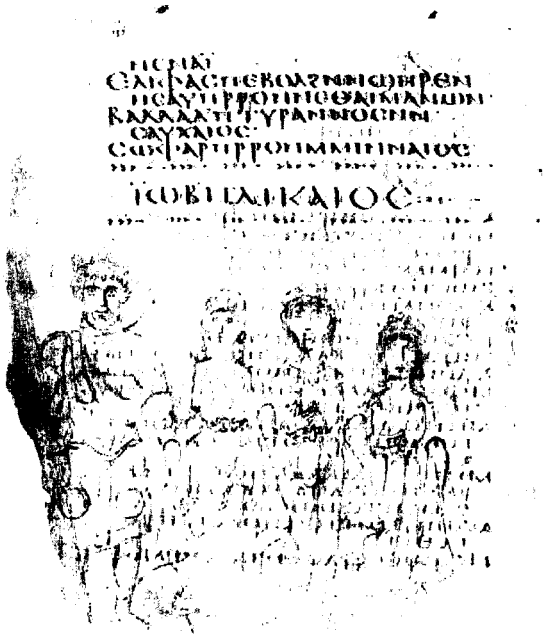


Fig. 185. Job and his daughters, Neapol. IB 18, Naples



Fig. 186. Maria Regina, St. Maria in Trastevere, Rome



Fig. 187. Maria Regina, detail of Fig. 186

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF EMPRESSES (641 – 1081)[1]

This list provides names of empress consorts and imperial daughters from 641 to 1081. The names of empress consorts correspond to the names of their husbands. If an emperor married more than one time, his name appears more than one time in the list.

Empress	**Emperor Husband**
Heraklian dynasty	
Fausta[2]	Constans II (641-68)[3]
Anastasia[4]	Constantine IV (668-85)[5]
Eudokia (1st wife)[6]	Justinian II (685-95)[7]
Unknown name (daughter of Eudokia and Justinian II)	
Unknown name	Leontios (695-8)[8]
Unknown name	Tiberios II Apsimar (698-705)[9]
Theodora (second wife)[10]	Justinian II (705-711)
Unknown name	Philippikos Bardanes (711-13)[11]
Irene[12]	Anastasios II (715-17)[13]
Unknown name	Theodosios III (715-717)[14]

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[1] Adapted from Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 229-231, and Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), Tables 11, 12, 14.

[2] Daughter of Valentinos Arsakuni, usurper in 645, of Armenian origin, ODB III, pp. 2151. Treadgold suggested that Fausta and Constans II married in 642, Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 310. Also see Philip Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962): pp. 3-63, especially p. 50, who mentions that her name is recorded only in the *Catalogus sepulchroum.*

[3] Grandson of Herakleios and son of Constantine III.

[4] Mentioned by Theophanes as Justinian II's mother on two occasions. Also see, Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," p. 50.

[5] Son of Constans II.

[6] Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," p. 32, n. 117, p. 51.

[7] Son of Constantine IV.

[8] He was a patrician of Isaurian origin, strategos of Anatolikon under Constantine IV and strategos of Hellas under Justinian II, was beheaded by Justinian II in 705, see ODB II, pp. 1212-1213.

[9] Gothic, Iranian, or Armenian in origin. *Droungarios* of the Kibyrrhaiotai under Leontios and sent to recapture North Africa; executed by Justinian II in 705. ODB III, pp. 2084.

[10] Sister of Khazar khagan, married Justinian in 703. ODB II, p. 1084. Also see Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," p. 51. Theophanes mentions her in Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, trans. Harry Turtledove (Philadelphia: 1982), A.M. 6196, 6198.

[11] He was a son of a patrician from Pergamon, served as military leader under Justinian II and was supported by Khazar khagan, see ODB III, pp. 1654.

[12] Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," p. 52 emphasizes that it is only in the *Catalogus sepulchorum* that her name is recorded.

[13] Served as *protoasekretis*, was beheaded by Leo III in 719, was buried in Holy Apostles, see ODB I, p. 87.

Isaurian dynasty

Maria[15]	Leo III (717-41)[16]
Kosmo (daughter of Maria and Leo III)	
Irene[17] (daughter of Maria and Leo III)	
Anna[18] (daughter of Maria and Leo III)	Artavasdus (741-43)[19]
Irene the Khazar (1st wife)[20]	Constantine V (741-75)[21]
Anthusa (daughter of Irene and Constantine V)	
Maria (2nd wife)[22]	Constantine V
Eudokia (3rd wife)[23]	Constantine V
Irene the Athenian[24]	Leo IV (775-780)[25]
Maria of Amnia[26] (1st wife)	Constantine VI (780-797)[27]
Irene[28] (daughter of Maria and Constantine VI)	
Theodote[29] (2nd wife)	Constantine VI

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[14] He was a tax collector of Atramyttion whom the troops of the Opsikion proclaimed emperor, see ODB III, pp. 2052.

[15] Came from Germanikeia, and probably married before 702. She was crowned empress in 718 at the baptism of Constantine V, see Mark Walter Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" (Ph. D. dissertation, The Catholic Univeristy of America, 1986), p. 32. She is mentioned by Theophanes, Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes* , A.M. 6211; also see Grierson, "Tombs and Obits of Byzantine Emperors," p. 53.

[16] Was appointed by Anastasios II to thematic leadership, ODB I, p. 87.

[17] Beside their name, the only known fact about Kosmo and Irene is that they were buried in the Holy Apostles, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 34.

[18] She married the strategos of the Armeniakon theme, Artavasdus, who rebelled against Leo V in 741, see Ibid., p. 34.

[19] Anastasios II appointed him strategos of the Armeniakon, he supported Leo III's bid for the empire, and married Leo's daughter, see ODB I, p. 192.

[20] Daughter of the Khazar king, married Constantine in 732 due to a political alliance between the emperor and the king. She died soon after 750, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 35.

[21] Son of Leo III.

[22] She died in 752 but otherwise unknown, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 36.

[23] Married before 764; she was the sister of Michael Melissenos, the strategos of the Anatolikon theme, see Ibid., pp. 37-38.

[24] She comes form the Sarantapechos or Tessarakontapechys family, however, little is know of her family before she came to Constantinople. A relative of Irene was Konstantinos Serantapechos, patrician in Hellas, see ibid., pp. 40-41, 112. For Irene also see for example, S. Runciman, "The Empress Irene the Athenian," in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker, *Studies in Church History Subsidia 1* (Oxford: 1978), 101-18; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 61-72; Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), pp. 51-129.

[25] Son of Constantine V.

[26] Granddaughter of St. Philaretos of Amnia (in Paphlagonia, near Gangra). Constantine VI divorced her in 795, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 42-43.

[27] Son of Leo IV.

[28] She was sent to a monastery along with her sister Euphrosyne and their mother in 795 on Prinkipo. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 43-44. For Euphrosyne, see below.

Name unknown, possibly Prokopia[30]	Nikephoros I (802-11)
Prokopia[31] (daughter of Nikephoros I)	Michael I (811-813)[32]
Georgo (daughter of Prokopia and Michael I)	
Theophano[33] (daughter of Prokopia and Michael I)	
Theophano[34] (relative of Irene the Athenian)	Staurakios (811)[35]
Theodosia[36] (2nd wife)	Leo V[37] (813-820)

Amorian dynasty

Thecla[38] (1st wife)	Michael II (820-829)
Unknown name (daughter of Thecla and Michael II)[39]	
Euphrosyne[40] (daughter of Constantine VI, 2nd wife)	Michael II
Theodora[41]	Theophilos (829-842)[42]

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[29] She was a *cubicularia* and her brothers were patricians; she was related to important monastic leaders of the period, as she was the cousin of Theodore of Stoudios and niece of Platon of Sakkoudion. Spent her life in monastic retirement after the blinding of Constantine VI. Her only son died as an infant. The date of her death is not known, see ibid., p. 44.

[30] According to Herlong, she probably died before Nikephoros ascended the throne, see ibid., p. 48.

[31] Married Michael in 793 was sent to the monastery ta Prokopias after Michael's rule, see ibid., p. 52.

[32] Michael I was synteknos of Leo V, who was synteknos with Michael II, ibid.pp. 51, 55-56.

[33] Georgo and Theophano were tonsured in 813 and probably lived in the same monastery as their mother. ibid., p. 53.

[34] She married Staurakios in 807 with whom she had no children. After the deposition of Staurakios she was sent to monastic retirement; she is buried along with Staurakios. Ibid., p. 50.

[35] Son of Nikephoros I.

[36] She married Leo V in or before 813. Theodosia was daughter of Arsaber, a patrician and quaestor, who was elevated as emperor by officials of Nikephoros's court in an ill fated coup. She was thus from an influential family and was able to delay the execution of the future Michael II. According to Herlong, she was also called Varka, and she married Leo V before 813. After the assassination of Leo, she was sent to the monastery of ta Despoton on Chalke. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 56. For Arsaber, also see Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford: 1997), p. 664. Treadgold, believes that the first wife of Leo V was called Barca, and that Theodosia, his second wife, was from an Armenian family. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 432.

[37] Leo came from an Armenian family and was born in Anatolia; his first wife was Barca, whom he divorced in 813, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 53.

[38] She died in 824. Herlong suggested that she was the daughter of Bardanios Tourkos, and her marriage to Michael dates to before 803. Ibid., p. 62. Bardanios Tourkos was a patrician and strategos of the Anatolikon theme who had strong connections with Leo V and Michael II and was elevated by his troops as emperor in 803, although without ultimate success, see Ibid., p. 59. Treadgold suggested that Thecla was the sister of Barca, Leo V's divorced wife. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, p. 433, n. 8. This suggestion, however, was rejected by Herrin who believes that it is simply a "romantic legend." See Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, 151, n. 47. Leo V was the godfather of the first child of Michael II and Thecla, Theopilos.

[39] Her name may have been Helene. She married Theophobos, an important general of Theophilos who was once elevated as emperor by his troops during Theophilos's reign. He was, however, executed at the time of Theophilos's death, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 66.

[40] She retired to the monastery Kyras Euphrosynes ta Libadia soon after Theophilos took power, see ibid., p. 44. For Euphrosyne, see Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, pp. 130-184.

[41] She was the daughter of the *turmarch* or *droungarios* of Paphlagonia, Marinos (from Ebissa) and niece of Manouel, *protostrator* of Michael I and *strategos* the Anatolikon theme. Marinos is not mentioned after

Thecla (daughter of Theodora and Theophilos)	
Anna (daughter of Theodora and Theophilos)	
Anastasia (daughter of Theodora and Theophilos)	
Pulcheria (daughter of Theodora and Theophilos)	
Maria[43] (daughter of Theodora and Theophilos)	
unknown name[44]	Bardas (Caesar 858-866)[45]
Irene (daughter of Caesar Bardas)	
Eudokia Dekapolitissa[46]	Michael III (842-867)

Macedonian dynasty

Eudokia Ingerina[47] (2nd wife)	Basil I (867-886)[48]
Anna (daughter of Eudokia and Basil)	
Helena (daughter of Eudokia and Basil)	
Maria, not married; (daughter of Eudokia and Basil)	
Anastasia[49] (daughter of Maria and Basil)	
Theophano Martinakia[50] (1st wife)	Leo VI (886-912)[51]

Theodora became empress, therefore probably died before her marriage to Theophilos, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 131-134; also see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 95-108. For Marinos, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 124, for Manouel, ibid., pp. 121-123.

[42] Son of Michael II.

[43] None of the daughters of Theophilos married, although Maria was engaged to Alexios Musele, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 68-70; also see Katerina Nikolaou, "Hoi gynaikes sto bio kai ta erga tou Theophilou," *Symmeikta* 9 (1994): pp. 137-51.

[44] She was said to be the sister of Irene of Chrysobalanton, from the Gouberios family. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 125-26.

[45] Brother of Theodora, ibid., pp. 124-125.

[46] Nothing is known of her family, see ibid., p. 71.

[47] Her father was Inger Martinakios; she died in 882. Ibid., p. 119. Also see Cyril Mango, "Eudokia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty," *Zbornik Radova* XIV-XV (1973): pp. 17-27; Ewald Kislinger, "Eudokia Ingerina, Basileios I, und Michael III," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 33 (1983): pp. 119-36.

[48] Basil's first wife was called Maria.

[49] All the princesses were sent to the convent of St. Euphemia tes Eumorphou built by Basil, where they were put to rest with the exception of Maria, who was buried in the Archistrategos tou Promotou. Maria may have been married to Christopher. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 78.

[50] Theophano died in 897, see ibid., p. 120; also see Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "La mort de Théophano (10.11,896 ou 895)," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 62 (1962): pp. 13-18. For Theophano, also see Albert Vogt, "La jeunesse de Léon VI le Sage," *Revue historique* 174 (1934): pp. 389-428, especially pp. 411-428; Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912), The Medieval Mediterranean. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, 400-1453* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 133-140; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 110-111.

[51] Son of Basil I and Eudokia Ingerina; for different views on Leo's parentage, see Mango, "Eudokia Ingerina, the Normans, and the Macedonian Dynasty," who believes that Leo VI was in fact the son of Michael III; and Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 42-68, who argues that Leo VI was the son of Basil I; also see Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe s.," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 41 (1991): pp. 85-111, who analyzes the rumors circulated about Leo's parentage.

Eudokia (daughter of Theophano and Leo)[52]		
Zoe Zautzaina[53]	(2nd wife)	Leo VI
Anna (daughter of Zoe Zautzaina and Leo VI)[54]		
Eudokia Baiana[55]	(3rd wife)	Leo VI
Zoe Carbonopsina[56]	(4th wife)	Leo VI
Anna (daughter of Zoe Carbonopsina and Leo)		
Helena[57] (daughter of Zoe Carbonopsina and Leo)		
name unknown		Alexander (912-913)
Theodora[58]		Romanos Lekapenos (920-944)
Helene (daughter of Theodora and Romanos)		
Agatha[59] (daughter of Theodora and Romanos)		
Unknown name (daughter of Theodora and Romanos)		
Unknown name (daughter of Theodora and Romanos)		
Sophia[60]		Christopher Lekapenos[61]
Anna[62]		Stephanos Lekapenos[63]
Helene[64] (1st wife)		Konstantinos Lekapenos[65]

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[52] She died before her mother's death in 897 as a child, see Werner Ohnsorge, "Zur Frage der Töchter Kaiser Leons VI," in *Konstantinopel und der Okzident* (Darmstadt: 1966), pp. 171-75, especially p. 175; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 136-139; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 111-113.

[53] Her father Stylianos was *micros hetaireiarches* under Basil I; see died in 899, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 144; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 136-146.

[54] She was made Augusta after Zoe's death and was to be married to Louis of Provence, but probably died young and was buried in Holy Apostles, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , p. 147. Herlong believes that the marriage to Louis actually took place, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 80.

[55] She came from the Opsikion theme and died in 901. Her family is not well known, but may have been among the nobility of Asia Minor, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 149-152; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 113-114.

[56] After the death of her husband and her brother-in-law, she was finally expelled from the palace in 918 by Romanos Lekapenos, and was forced to take monastic vows at the St. Euphemia in Petrion, where she was also buried. Photienos, the protospatharios and strategos of Sicily was Zoe's grandfather, who appears to have been a relative of Theophanes Confessor, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 104-105; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , pp. 153-163; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 114-117.

[57] Ohnsorge believes that Leo and Zoe Carbonopsina had two daughters, see Ohnsorge, "Zur Frage der Töchter Kaiser Leons VI," while Tougher disagrees on this point, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912)* , p. 163.

[58] She was crowned Augusta on January 6, 921 and died on February 20, 924. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 148-149.

[59] She married Romanos Argyros in 922. Ibid., p. 155.

[60] She was crowned in February, 924. Her father was Niketas the patrician, later magistros, who appears to have been an aristocrat in Constantinople. She married Christopher before 918 and retired to ta Kanikeiou after Christopher died. Ibid., p. 149-150.

[61] He was crowned co-emperor on May 17, 921, died in August, 931. Ibid., pp. 149-150.

[62] Daughter of Gabalas, and granddaughter of a man named Katakylas, who was a cousin of Michael II; she probably married Stephanos after 924. Ibid., p. 153.

[63] Crowned on December 25, 924, and tonsured and exiled in 945. Ibid., p. 153.

[64] Married in 931and died in 932. She was the daughter of the patrician Adrianos from the Armeniakon theme. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

Theophano[66] (2nd wife)	Konstantinos Lekapenos
Helene Lekapena (marriage: May, 919)[67]	Constantine VII (913-59)
Zoe (daughter of Helene and Constantine VII)	
Agatha (daughter of Helene and Constantine VII)	
Theodora (daughter of Helene and Constantine VII)	
Anna (daughter of Helene and Constantine VII)	
Theophano[68] (daughter of Helene and Constantine VII)	
Maria-Irene, granddaughter of Romanos Lekap.[69]	Peter of Bulgaria (d. 969)[70]
Names unknown[71] (daughters of Maria and Peter)	
Bertha Eudokia[72] (1st wife)	Romanos II (959-963)[73]
Anastasia-Theophano[74] (2nd wife)	Romanos II
	2nd husband: Nikephoros Phokas[75]
Helena (daughter of Theophano and Romanos II)	
Anna (daughter of Theophano and Romanos II)[76]	
Theodora (sister of Romanos II)	John Tzimiskes (969-76)[77]
Not married	Basil II (976-1025)[78]

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[65] Crowned on December 25, 924, exiled in 945. Ibid., p. 154.

[66] She married Konstantinos in 935. She is from the Mamas family. Ibid., p. 154.

[67] For date of marriage see ibid., p. 84. She was senior Augusta at the beginning of the reign, and then after 931. She died in 962, and was buried in the Myrelaion. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" , p. 157.

[68] All daughters of Helene and Constantine VII were tonsured upon the accession of Romanos II. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 85.

[69] The marriage took place on Octover 8, 927, and Niketas, her paternal grandfather escorted Peter to Constantinople. She died in 968. Ibid., p. 149.

[70] Jonathan Shepard, "A Marriage Too Far? Maria Lekapena and Peter of Bulgaria," in *The Empress Theophano. Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the Frist Millenium*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 121-49.

[71] In 969 they were sent to Constantinople to marry Basil II and Constantine VIII, this marriage, however, did not materialize. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 152.

[72] The marriage took place in 944 but Bertha died in 949; for Bertha and the the marriage, see Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, trans. ed. Gyula Moravcsik and trsl. Romili J. H. Jenkins, vol. I, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), p. 112; Liudprand of Cremona, *The Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, trans. F. A. Wright (London: 1993), Antapodosis, V/20, p. 139; I. Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* (Bonn: 1838) De Romano Lacapeno, ch. 46, p. 431.

[73] Son of Constantine VII.

[74] She married Romanos II in 956. Herlong suggests that it is more likely that Theophano came from a prominent family and that references to her humble origin are due to invective. There is, however, very little that we know about Theophano's background aside from the name of her father, Krateros. She married Romanos II in 956, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 86, 142-143; also see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 126-135.

[75] (963-9), his former wife was named Pleustaina; for Nikephoros, see ODB III, pp. 1478-1479, also see Gustave Schlumberger, *Un Empereur Byzantin au dixième siècle, Nicéphore Phocas* (Paris: 1890).

[76] Herlong only mentions one daughter, Anna, born in 963, Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 142.

[77] He was a relative and ally of Nikephoros Phokas, see ODB II, p. 1045.

[78] Son of Romanos II and Theophano and brother of Constantine VIII; see for example Stephen Arnold Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University,

Anna (sister of Basil II)	Vladimir of Kiev
Helena Alypia[79]	Constantine VIII (1025-28)[80]
Eudocia (daughter of Helena and Constantine VIII)[81]	
Zoe (daughter of Helena and Constantine VIII)[82]	1st husband: Romanos III (1028-34)[83]
	2nd husband: Michael IV (1034-41)[84]
	adopted son: Michael V (1041-42)[85]
	3rd hb.: Constantine IX (1042-55)[86]
Theodora Porhpyrogenneta (1055-56)[87]	
Aikaterina (daughter of John Vladislav of Bulg.)	Isaak Komnenos (1057-59)[88]
Daughter of Constantine Dalassenos[89] (1st wife)	Constantine X Doukas (1059-67)[90]
Eudokia Makrembolitissa[91] (2nd wife)	Constantine X
	2nd hb.: Romanos IV (1068-71)[92]
Theodora (daughter of Eudokia and Constantine)[93]	

1983), pp. 24-153; Catherine J. Holmes, "Basil II and the Government of Empire (976-1025)" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1999).

[79] Her father, Alpyios was an aristocrat, see Lynda Garland, ""The Eye of the Beholder": Byzantine Imperial Women and Their Public Image from Zoe Porphyrogenita to Euphrosize Kamaterissa Doukaina (1028-1203)," *Byzantion* LXIV (1994): pp. 19-39, 261-313, especially p. 31.

[80] Son of Romanos II and Theophano and brother of Basil II, see ODB I, p. 503; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 158-173.

[81] See Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (London: 1966), Book II, ch. 4-5, p. 55

[82] See Gustave Schlumberger, *Les Porphyrogénètes Zoé et Théodora, 1025-1057. L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle* (Paris: 1895); Ernst Gamillscheg, "Zoe und Theodora als Träger dynastischer Vorstellungen in den Geschichtsquellen ihrer Epoche," in *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung des Ostens und des Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends* (Köln: 1991), 397-403; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 136-158 and Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* (New York: 1999), pp. 42-55, with further bibliography.

[83] See ODB III, p. 1807; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 174-189.

[84] See ODB II, p. 1365; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 190-210; Milton V. Anastos, "The Coronation of Emperor Michael IV in 1034 by Empress Zoe and its Significance," in *To Hellenikon. Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis Jr. Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium*, ed. J Langdon, et al. (New Rochelle, New York, Caracas: 1993), pp. 23-43.

[85] See ODB II, p. 1366; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 211-217.

[86] See ODB I, p. 540; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 239-285.

[87] See Heinrich Mädler, *Theodora, Michael Stratiotikos, Isaak Komnenos. Ein Stück byzantinischer Kaisergeschichte* (Plauen I. V.: 1894); Schlumberger, *Les Porphyrogénètes Zoé et Théodora, 1025-1057. L'épopée byzantine à la fin du dixième siècle* ; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081," pp. 299-304; Gamillscheg, "Zoe und Theodora als Träger dynastischer Vorstellungen in den Geschichtsquellen ihrer Epoche;" Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 161-167; and Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* , pp. 55-58, with further bibliography.

[88] ODB II, pp. 1011-1012; Kamer, "Emperors and Aristocrats in Byzantium, 976-1081" , pp. 310-333.

[89] She died before he came to throne.

[90] See Demetrios I. Polemis, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London: 1968), pp. 28-34; ODB I, pp. 504-505.

[91] She is the nice of the patriarch Michael Keroularios. Her father was John Makrembolites, a man with connections to the imperial bureaucracy, see ODB II, pp. 739-740; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , p. 168-179, Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204* , pp. 62-66.

[92] See ODB III, p. 1807.

Anna (daughter of Eudokia and Constantine)[94]
Irene (daughter of Eudokia and Constantine)[95]
Zoe (daughter of Eudokia and Constantine)[96]
Maria of Alania[97]

Michael VII Doukas (1071-78)[98]
2nd hb.: Nikephoros Botaniates[99]

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[93] Polemis, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* , p. 54.
[94] She married the doge of Venice, Domenico Silvio, see ibid. , p. 53.
[95] Polemis does not list her as daughter of Eudokia and Constantine X, see ibid. .
[96] She married Adrianos Komnenos, a military commander, see ibid. , pp. 54-55.
[97] Daughter of the Georgian King Bagarat IV (1027-72). For Maria, see Margaret Mullett, "The 'Disgrace' of the Ex-Basilissa Maria," *Byzantinoslavica* 44-45 (1983-84): pp. 202-11; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 180-186.
[98] Polemis, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* , pp. 42-46; ODB II, pp. 1366-1367.
[99] (1078-81). See B. Leib, "Nicéphore III Botaniates (1078-1081) et Marie d'Alanie" (Actes du VIe Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Paris, 1948), pp. 129-40; ODB III, p. 1479.

APPENDIX B: GREEK TEXTS

Poems on the marriage of Leo VI and Constantine VII

1.
Εἰς τὸν γάμον τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Λέοντος.[100]

Ἀπὸ πασσάλου καθεῖλον
λύραν εὐστόχως λαλοῦσαν,
δροσερὰν κόρην νοήσας
ὑπὸ παστάδα γλυκεῖαν.
Ἄμ' ἄρ' οὖν τοὺς στεφάνους πλέξατε πάντες
ὀργανόφωνον ἔπος μέλψατε, κοῦροι.
Βλέπε τοῦ πόθου τὸ κέντρον,
βλέπε τοῦ πόθου τὸ πλῆκτρον·
θέλε τὴν φλόγα δροσίζειν,
δροσερὸν πόθον φλογίζειν.
Δαφνοφόρους θαλάμους καὶ ῥοδοπλόχμους
ἑλκεσίπεπλον, ἄναξ, δέχνυσο νύμφην.
Δότε μοι ῥόδον φορῆσαι,
δότε μοι νάβλαν δονῆσαι·
ἄφες ὡς φιλῶ κροτήσω,
ἄφεσ ὡς θέλω χορεύσω.
Ἱμερόφωνε κόρη, χρύχεον ἔρνος,
κυμβαλόφωνα μέλη δέχνυσο ταῦτα.
Μάθε πῶς πόθοσ ποθεῖται,
μάθε μῶς ἔρως ἐρᾶται·
Χαρίτων χάριν λαβοῦσα
χάριν ἀντίδος μεγίστην.
Ἥλιε, φωτοφόρον σύζυγον εὗρες,
κρουσίλυρον παρέχω νῦν ὅθεν ἆσμα.
Ἐθέλω, θέλω χορεύειν,
ἐθέλω κρότους ἐγείρειν,
γαμικον μέλοσ προσάδειν,
ἵνα πᾶς βλέπων συνάδῃ.
Εὔχροος ἀγλαΐῃ, χρώματος ἄνθος,
ἄνθεϊ μαργαρέῳ σώματοσ αἴγλη.
Λογικοῖς μέτροισι μέλψω
σοφίης ἄγαλμα θεῖον·
λογίων σοφῶν γὰρ ἄρτι
Χάριτες πάλιν γελῶσιν.
Ῥοδόεις, ἱμερόεις, λευκοκρινόχρους,
θαλέθων θάμβος ἔχων νυμφίος ἔστιν.
Κεφαλὴν ῥόδοισ ἀνάψασ
λύραν Ὀρφέως τινάσσω,

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[100] Theodorus Bergk, *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* (Leipzig: 1882), pp. 356-357.

στεφάνοις ἄνακτα βάλλων,
ὅτι καλόν ἐστι θαῦμα.
Μειλιχόθυμον ἔαρ, κάλλος ἐῶον,
ξυνοτερπές τι φάος πᾶσι φαάνθης.
Παλάμαις ῥόδον λαβοῦσα
ποτὶ σὰς κόμιζε κοίτας,
ὁ ἔρως ὅπως συνών σοι
νομίμοις πόθοις δαμάσσῃ.
Ξανθόκομος, ῥοδόχρους παὶς ἀνεδείχθης,
τῶν χαριτοβλεφάρων ὡς ὑπερήρθης.
Γλυκερὴν ὅλην χορείην
φιλόμολπον εὗρον ἄρτι·
διὸ καὶ κλάδους γελῶνταν
κατέχων, τρίχας τινάσσω.
Ἐρατὴ Πηνελόπη, δώματοσ ἄστρον,
νεκταρέοισιν ἴοις παστάδα ῥαίνω.
Ὁ ἔρως βέλη τιταίνων,
ὁ πόθος φύσεις συνάπτων,
καλύκων χάριν παρέξει
ῥοδοδακτύλου λοχείας.
Εἴσιθι, βαῖνε, κρότει, χαῖρε χορεία,
χρυσορόφοις θαλάμοις ἀμφιπολοῦσα.
Φλογερὰν ἔχεις φαρέτρεν,
φλογέοις τύπηθι κέντροις,
ἵνα σὰς φρένασ λιπαίνοις,
ἵνα πᾶν μέλος γλυκαίνοις.
Ἐπέων ἡδυτάτων ἴδμονες ἄνδρες
τὰ ποσίκρουστα μέλη ῥυθμονομεῖτε·
Μακάρων ἄνασσα τέκνον,
Χαρίτων ἔχεις τὸ κάλλος·
εἴ τις οὐκ ἔχει σε θαῦμα,
λιθίνας φρένας κομίζει.
.....
.....

2.
Εἰς τὸν γάμον τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Λεοντος.[101]

Ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν, πολῖται,
βροτέη χάρις κεχύσθω·
γαμικὸν μέλος δονείσθω,
δροσερὰ κόρη στεφέσθω.
Δαφνοφόρους θαλάμους καὶ ῥοδοπλόκμους
ἑλκεσίπεπλον, ἄναξ, δέχνυσο νύμφην.
Ἐπὶ χπυσόπαστον οἶκον
ζαθέη κόρη βαδίζει,

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[101] Ibid. , p. 358.

χαριτοβλέφαρος ἄρτι
θαλερῷ νέῳ πλακεῖσα.
Ἱμερόφωνε κόρη, χρύχεον ἄστρον,
εὐγενόφωνα μέλη δέχνυσο ταῦτα.
Ἴδε πῶς ἅπαντα χαίρει,
καλὸν ὡς ἔαρ δὲ λάμπει
λογάδος γάμῳ φερίστης
μετὰ κυμβάλων προθύμως.
Ἐπέων ἡδυτάτων ἱδμονες ἄνδρες,
τὰ ποσίκρουστα μέλη δεῦτε τελεῖτε.
Νομίμως Λέων ποθήσας
ξεναγεῖ γάμῳ πολίτας·
ὅθεν, ὦ φίλοι παρόντες,
παρὰ παστάδα τρυφᾶτε.
Εἴσιθι, χαῖρε, κρότει ξανθόπαις φῦλον,
ἀργυρόπαστα κύκλῳ δώματα βαῖνε.
Ῥοδέην φύσιν συνεύνου
σύ, Λέων, παραγκαλίζει·
τὰ πόθου βέλεμνα τοίνυν
ὑποδύς, τρύγα τὰ μῆλα.
Ἥλιε, φωτοφόρον σύζυγον εἶρες,
ἀστέρας εὐστεφέας παῖδας ἔνεγκοις.
Φέρε λαμπάδας κομίζων
χαρίεν μέλος προσοίσω·
ψόγος οὐδαμῶς γάρ ἐστι
νομίμους γάμους λιγαίνειν.
.....
.....

3.
Εἰς τὴν Αὐγούσταν Ἑλένην Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ νέου σύζυγον.[102]

Ἡδύκομον, ῥοδόχρουν, χρύσεον ἄνθος,
παρτενόφωνα μέλη δέχνυσο ταῦτα.
Ἀπ' ἐμῶν δόμων κατέσξον
λύραν εὐστόχως λαλοῦσαν,
δροσερὰν κόρην νοήσας
ὑπὸ παστάδα γλυκεῖαν.
Δαιδαλέους θαλάμουσ ἠδ' ὑμεναίους
νυμφιδίους ὁρόω καὶ ῥόδα ῥαίνω.
Δότε μοι ῥόδον φορῆσαι,
δότε μοι νάβλαν δονῆσαι,
ἄφες ὡς θέλω χορεύσω,
ἄφεη ὡς θέλω κροτήσω.
Ἀμαράντουσ στεφάνους πλέξαντε πάντες,
ὀργανόφωνον ἔπος μέλψατε κοῦροι.
Ἐθέλω, θέλω χορεύειν,

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[102] Ibid. , pp. 361-362.

ἐθέλω μέλη λυρίζειν,
γαμικὸν μέλος προσάδειν,
ἵνα πᾶς βλέπων συνάδῃ.
Εἴσιθι, βαῖνε, κρότει, χαῖρε χορεία,
χρυσορόφοις θαλάμοις ἀμφιπολοῦσα.
Γλυκεὴν ἐφεῦρον ἄρτι
φιλόμολπον ὧδε τάξιν·
διὸ καὶ κλάδους γελῶντας
κατέχων τρίχας τινάσσω.
Ἐπέων ἡδυτάτων ἵδμονες ἄνδρες,
τὰ ποσίκρουστα μέλη ῥυτμονομεῖτε.
Κεφαλὴν ῥόδοις ἀνάψας,
λύραν Ὀρφέως κροτήσας,
στεφάνοις ἄνακτα βάλλω,
ὅτι καλόν ἐστιν ἔρνος.
Νεκταρέοισιν ἴοις στέψατε νύμφην,
ἐρατὴν νῦν Ἑλένην χάρμα τεκόντων.
Βλέπε τοῦ ῥόδου τὸ κέντρον,
βλέπε τοῦ πόθου τὸ πλῆκτρον,
θέλε τὴν φλόγα δροσίζειν,
δροσερὸν πόθον φλογίξειν.
Παστάσιν ἀργυρέαις καὶ ῥοδοπλόκμοις
ἑλκεσίπεπλον, ἄναξ, δέχνυσο νύμφην.
Μάθε πῶς πόθος ποθεῖται,
μάθε πῶς ἔρως ἐρᾶται,
χαρίτων χάριν λαβοῦσα,
χάριν ἀντίδος γλυκίστην.
Ἥλιε, φωτοφόρον σύζυγον εὗρες,
κρουσίλυρον παρέχω νῦν ὅθεν ἆσμα.
Ἀπαλὴν κόρην λαβών γε
ποτὶ σὰς κόμιζε κοίτας,
ὁ ἔρως ὅπως συνών σοι
νομίμους πόθους διδάξῃ.
Ἱμερόφωνε κόρη, ποικίλον ἄνθος,
κυμβαλόφωνα μέλη προσφέρω, δέχου.
Φλογέην ἔχεις τὴν φύσιν,
φλογέοις τύπηθι φίλτροις,
ἵνα σάς φρένας γλυκαίνοις,
ἵνα πᾶν μέλος ἰαίνοις.
Ξυνοτερπές τι φαός πᾶσι φαάνθης,
μειλιχόθυμον ἔαρ, κάλλος ἐῷον.
Ὁ ἔρως βέλη τιταίνων,
ὁ πόθος φύσεις συνάπτων,
καλύκων χάριν παρέξει
ῥοδοδακτύλου λοχείας.
Ξανθότριχος, ἀνθόπνους παῖς ἐφαάνθης,
τῶν χαριτοβλεφάρων ὡς ὑπερήρτης.
Μακάρων τέκνον τοκήων,
Χαρίτων ἔχεις τὸ κάλλος·

ὅστις οὐκ ἔχει σε θαῦμα,
λιθίνασ φρένας κομίζει.
Ῥοδόεις, ἱμερόεις, λευκοκρινόχρους
θαλέθων Κωνσταντῖνος νυμφίος λάμπει.

4.
Dedicatory poem on f. 5v of Paris gr. 922[103]

ΕΥρὼν ὁ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἀγάπην ξυνωρίδα
ΔΟξης ὑμᾶς ἔπλησε τῆς σκηπτουχίας
ΚΙνημα τοῦτο καὶ βάσις οὐρανία
ΑΣύγκριτός τε καὶ ξένοως νοουμένη
Η νῷ νοεῖται τὰ ξένα δεδορκότι
ΔΕΛτοις προσαθφοῦντί τε πνευματορρύτοις
ΤΟΣαῦτα τοίνυν ἐκπονοῦντες ἐμφρόνως
ΑΥλον ὄντως ἔυρατε κληρουχίαν
Γήινον ἐμπτύσαντες ἅπαντα πόθον
Οθεν στέφει νῦν ὡραΐζεσθε κράτους
Υμνοις τε πᾶσι καὶ βίβλοις θεοτρόποις
Σὺν τοῖς καταστράπτουσι παισὶ τῷ στέφει
Τοῖς πορφύρας τε τοῖς σελασφόροις κλάδοις
Ηκουσασ ὦ δέσποινα καὶ κοσμοκράτορ
Σοὶ ταῦτα πάντα καὶ διὰ σὲ τυγχάνει
Παρίσταται δὲ καὶ χορὸς τῶν ἁγίων
Εμπαρέχων σοι τὰς θεογράφους βίβλους
Λύσαις ἄνασσα τὸν ζόφον τὸν τῆς λύπης
Εἰς φῶς μὲ τὸν σὸν ἱκέτην καλλιγράφον
Ιθυνον εὐόδωσον οἷς οἶδας τρόποις.

Excerpts from Vatican gr. 1851[104]

5.
Folio 3r:
Μετὰ δὲ τούτους ἔπεμψεν
πάσας του συγγενίδας,
μέχρι τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα
καὶ ἐπέκεινα νομίζω,
νὰ ἔναι καισάρων ἅπασαι
καὶ σεβαστοκρατόρων
στεφηφορούντων δεσποτῶν,
πορφυφανθῶν παιδία.
καὶ μίαν ἀπὸ τὰσ πρόκρειτασ
εἰς ἣν ἐθάρρει πλέον,
παρήγγειλεν ὁ βασιλεὺς

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[103] Ioannis Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, Byzantina Neerlandica 6* (Leiden: 1976), p. 103.
[104] Ibid. , pp. 223, 225-226.

τοὺς ὅλους νὰ προλάβῃ
καὶ μόνη ἐκείνη νὰ σὲ ἰδῇ
δικαίω τοῦ γνησιωτέρως
καὶ νὰ σὲ ἀλλάξῃ ῥωμαϊκόν,
δεσποινικὸν ἱμάτιν,
καὶ πάσαν ἄλλην κόσμησιν
ἁρμόζουσαν αὐγούσταις,
καὶ οὕτως νὰ σὲ ἴδουν ἅπαντες
καὶ νὰ σὲ προσκυνήσουν.

6.
Folio 6r:
Πλησίον τοῦ τοίχους ἔξωθεν
τῆς πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης,
τοῦ κάστρου τοῦ περιφανοῦς
τῆς χώρας τῶν ῥωμαίων,

Folio 6v:
ἢ μᾶλλον τῶν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν
ἁπάντων τοῦ καλλίου,
τοῦ μὴ μετά τινος ποσῶς
συγκρινομένου κάστρου,
κατὰ εἴ τι ἄν εἴπης ἔπαινον,
κατὰ εἴ τι ἄν εἴπης πρᾶγμα,
εἰς ὃ μετὰ τὴν αὔριον
τῶ βασιλεῖ ῥωμαίων,
τὸν μέγαν αὐτοκράτορα
καὶ πενθερόν σου αὐγούστα,
μετὰ πολλῆς λαμπρότητος
νὰ ἰδῆς κατεσκευάσθη,
ἐξέβην ἡ ἀνδραδέλφη σου,
τοῦ βασιλέως ἡ πρώτη
θυγάτηρ καὶ βασίλισσα,
νὰ σὲ συναναντήσῃ
καὶ δουλικῶς τῶ κράτει σου
καὶ αὐτὴ νὰ προσκυνήσῃ.
(Μ)τὰ δὲ ποίας λαμπρότητος.
καὶ ποταπῆς ἐξέβην

Excerpts from the Menologion of Basil II

7.
Synaxis of Theophano[105]

[105] PG 117, pp. 209-210.

Μνήμη τῆς μακαρίας Θεοφανοῦς, γυναικὸς Λέοντος τοῦ ἀοιδίμου καὶ σοφωτάτου βασιλέως ἡμῶν γενομένου.
Ἡ μακαρία δέσποινα Θεοφανω, ὑπῆρχε τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ θρέμμα καὶ βασίλισσα· ἐγένετο γὰρ θυγάτηρ Κωνσταντίνου ἰλλουστρίου, συγγενοῦς βασιλέων τριῶν. Ἡ δὲ μήτηρ αὐτῆς ἐκαλεῖτο Ἄννα, ἦν δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ στεῖρα, καὶ ἄγονος, ὡς ἡ πρώην Ἄννα ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ προφήτου Σαμουήλ. Αλλὰ πυκνῶς ἀπερχομένη, καὶ παρακαλοῦσα, μετὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν δέσποιναν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον, τὴν ἐν τοῖς Βάσσου τιμωμένην συνέλαβεν ἐν γαστρὶ τὴν ἁγίαν Θεοφανώ· καὶ γεννήσασα ἐξέθρεψεν ἐναρέτως, διδάξασα αὐτὴν καὶ γράμματα, καὶ ἐπεὶ Βασίλειος ὁ περιβόητος βασιλεὺς γυναῖκα ἐβουλεύσατο δοῦναι τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Λέοντι τῷ σοφωτατῳ βασιλεῖ, παρὰ ταύτην κρείττονα μὴ εὑρὼν, δέδωκεν αὐτῷ ταύτην. Στεφθεῖσα δὲ καὶ βασιλεύσασα, ὅμως τῶν πτωχῶν οὐκ ἐπελάθετο· ἀλλὰ τῆς συνήθους ἐχομενη ἀρετῆς καὶ ἐλευμοσύνης, ἐθεράπευε τὸν Θεὸν τὸν αὐτῇ δωρησάμενον τὴν βασιλείαν οὐράνῶν.

8.
Synaxis of Theodora[106]

Μνήμη Θεοδώρας τῆς βασιλίσσης τῆς ποιησάσης τὴν ὀρθοδοξίαν.
Ἡ μακαρία Θεοδώρα, ἡ βασίλισσα, ἐγένετο γυνὴ Θεοφίλου βασιλέως τοῦ Εἰκονομάχου· οὐκ ἦν δὲ αἱρετικὴ, ὥσπερ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς. Ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ τὸν ἅγιον Μεθόδιον τὸν πατριάρχην Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐξώρισε, καὶ ἀντ' ἐκείνο ἐποίησε πατριάρχην Ἰωάννην τὸν Λεκανόμαντιν, καὶ τὰς ἁγίας εἰκόνας κατέκαυσεν. Ἐκείνη δὲ εἶ καὶ φανερῶς οὐκ ἐτόλμα προσκυνεῖν τὰς ἁγίας εἰκόνας, ὅμως εἶχεν αὐτὰς κεκρυμμένας ἐν τῷ κοιτῶνι αὐτῆς· καὶ τῇν νυκτὶ ἱστατο προσευχομένη, καὶ παρακαλοῦσα τὸν Θεὸν, ἵνα ποιήσῃ ἔλεος μετὰ τῶν ὀρθοδόξων. Ἐγεννησε δὲ υἱὸν ὀνόματι Μιχαὴλ, καὶ ἐδίδασκε καὶ αὐτον ὀρθοδοξίαν. Μετὰ δὲ τελευτὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς, ἤγαγε τὸν ἅγιον Μεθόδιον· καὶ συνήγαγε τὴν ἱερὰν σύνοδον, καὶ ἀνέθεμάτισε τοὺς Εἰκονομάχους, καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην κατεβίβασε τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ τὰς ἁγίας εἰκόνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Εἶτα ἐτελεύτησε καταλιποῦσα τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτῆς Μιχαήλ.

9. Excerpt from the Life of Theophano[107]

Τοῦ δὲ ὑετοῦ σφοδρῶς ἐπιτεινομένου καὶ ῥαγδαίοις κρότοις πρὸς τὴν γῆν φερομένου καὶ μὴ ἐῶντος αὐτάς τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς πορείας ποιεῖσθαι, πρὸς τοὺς ἔνδον τοῦ ναοῦ περιβόλους ἡ νεᾶνις ὡς φυγὰς ὥξετο. Καὶ δὴ ἔνδον τοῦ ναοῦ γενομένη, πρὸς τὴν ἐκ δεξιῶν ἑστῶσαν τῆς Θεομήτορος εἰκόνα χαριέντως προσδραμοῦσα, ἀσπάζεσθαι ταύτην καὶ προσκυνεῖν ἐπεχείρει. Ἐπὶ πολλὰσ δὲ ὥρας τοῦτο ποιοῦσα τῶ δοκεῖν ἐκεῖ παρεστῶσα καὶ τὴν κάραν προσκλίνασα τῇ εἰκόνι, εἰσ ὕπνον ἐτράπη· καὶ ὁρᾷ δῆθεν καθ' ὕπνουσ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Θεομήτορος προτρέπουσαν τῇ ἑτέρᾳ ἐκεῖσε πλησίον ἑστώσῃ εἰκόνι τοῦ λαβεῖν ἔλαιον ἐκ τῆς κανδήλης καὶ χρῖσαι τῆς νέας κόρης τὴν κάραν. Ἡ δὲ τοῦτο λαβοῦσα καὶ μόνην τὴν ταύτης ὑπαλείψασα κάραν, λεχθῆναι πάλιν πρὸς ταύτην· "Μὴ μόνον ταύτης ἀλείψῃς τὴν κάραν, ἀλλὰ χρῖσον αὐτῆς καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ἐλαίῳ τε καὶ τῇ συμπαθείᾳ. Ἡ δὲ τροφὸς αὐτῆς ἅμα τῶν συνόντων αὐτῇ θεραπαινίδων ἀντικρὺ ἔξω τοῦ ναοῦ διὰ τὸν ὄμβρον καθεζομένη εἶδεν ἄφνω φῶς ἐξαστράψαν ἐπὶ τὴν κόρην καὶ ὃν ἐφόρει λευκὸν χιτῶνα ἀλουργίδος ἄνθει καταβαφέντα· καὶ ἐν ἐκπλήξει τοῦ θαύματος γεναμένη, αὖθις τὴν παῖδα ταῖς οἰκείαις ἀγκάλαις ἀναλαβοῦσα τὸ συμβὰν εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἐξηρώτα. Ἡ δὲ παῖς πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ

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[106] PG 117, pp. 307-308.
[107] Eduard ed. Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," *Mémoires de L'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg, VIIIe série* III, no. 2 (1898): I-XI, pp. 1-132, ch. 6, p. 4/3-21.

ἐξεῖπεν· αὕτη δὲ τὸ ἑαυτῇ θεαθὲν ἀποκρύβει καὶ οὐκέτι πρὸς τὸ λούσασθαι ἑαυτὴν ἀποφέρει, ἀλλ' οἴκαδε πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον αὐτῆς πατέρα ταύτην σπουδαίως ὑποστρέφει καὶ τὴν τοῦ θαύματος αὐτῷ διηγησαμένη λαμπρὰν θεωρίαν, τὸ μέλλον εἰς αὐτὴν ἀπεσκόπει.

10.

Excertp from the description of miracles at the shrine of the Pege[108]

Ἐπὶ τούτοις καὶ βασιλὶς Εἰρήνη, ἔτι Κωνστατνίνῳ ⟨συμ⟩βασιλεούσα τῷ υἱῷ, χαλεπῷ πάθει αἱμορροίασ περιπέπτωκε· καὶ μήτε μετλαμβάνουσα βρώσεως μήτε μετέχουσα πόσεως, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἰατρῶν φαρμακείας κενὰς καὶ ἀχρήστους ἀποδεικνύσα, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀπεῖπον τὴν ἴασιν, ἐπιστῆναι τάχος προσεδόκα τὴν τελευτήν· καὶ διδαχθεῖσα παρά τινος τῶν πεπειραμένων τῶν θαυμάτων τῆς θεομήτορος ἐκ τοῦ τῆς ἱερᾶς Πηγῆς πιεῖν ἁγιάσματος, τὸν ναὸν ἀπτέρῳ τάχει κατέλαβε. Καὶ καταλαβοῦσα ἡνίκα μεταλαμβάνειν τοῦ ἁγιάσματος ἤρξατο, ἀνεστάλη μὲν αὐτῇ τὸ καταρρέον τοῦ αἵματος, ἡ δὲ ὑγεία αὐθις ἀπεδόθη κατὰ τὸ τέλεον· ὧν χάριν καὶ πέπλους χρυσοϋφεῖς καὶ περίχρυσα καταπετάσματα, σωληνωτὰ τῇ συνηθείᾳ καλούμενα, σὺν τῷ ταύτης υἱῷ καὶ στέφος καὶ τῆς ἀναιμάκτου θυσίας δοχεῖα λίθοις καὶ μαργαρίταις κεκοσμημένα προσήγαγε· καὶ προσέταξεν ἐν ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς μέρεσι τοῦ ναοῦ διὰ ψηφίδων ἐκτυπωθῆναι τὰ τούτων ἀφομοιώματα, προσφέροντα ταῖς χερσὶν ὅσα καὶ ἀπηρίθμηται ἀναθήματα, εἰς μνήμην διαιωνίζουσαν, ὡς ἂν καὶ ἡ τούτων πίστις χαρακτηρίζηται καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ τῆς αἱμορροίας θαῦμα διά τε τῆς ἀναστηλώσεως καὶ τῆς προσαγωγῆς τῶν ἀναθημάτων εἰς τοὺς μετέπειτα χρόνους ᾄδηται καὶ ἀνακηρύττηαι.

Excerpts from the Book of Ceremonies

11.

Καλῶς ἦλθες, θεοεπιλεκτε Αὐγοῦστα. ... Καλῶς ἦλθες, θεοσκέπαστε Αὐγοῦστα. Καλῶς ἦλθες, ὁ δεῖνα, χαρὰ Ῥωμαίων. ... Καλῶς ἦλθες, ἡ εὐγένεια τῆς πορφύρας. ... Καλῶς ἦλθες, ἡ ποθουμένη παρὰ πάντας. ... σύ ἐκ θείας ψήφου προεχειπίσθης εἰς σύστασιν καὶ ἀνέγερσιν τοῦ κόσμου, σὺ ἐνυμφεύθης ἐκ Θεοῦ τῇ πορφύρᾳ· σέ εὐλόγησεν ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, στεφανώσας σε τῇ αὐτοῦ παλάμῃ, ἀλλ' ὁ εἰς ταύτην καλέσας σε τὴν ἀξίαν καί συζεύξας σε ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεσπότῃ, τοὺς χρόνους σου πληθύνῃ ἐν τῇ πορφύρᾳ. Εἰσακούσῃ ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ λαοῦ ὑμῶν.[109]

12.

Αὕτη ἡ χαρὰ καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ κόσμου... ἐν ᾗ το στέφος τῆς βασιλειας τῇ κορυφῇ σου ἀξίως περιετέθη. ... Δόξα Θεῷ τῷ ἀναδείξαντι σε βασίλισσαν. ... Δόξα Θεῷ τῷ στέψαντι τὴν κορυφήν σου. ... Ἀλλ' ὁ στέψας σε ὁ δεῖνα αὐτοχείρως ... φυλάξῃ σε εἰς πλήθη χρόνων ἐν τῇ πορφύρᾳ.[110]

13.

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[108] "De sascris aedibus deque miraculis Deiparae ad Fontem," in *Acta Sanctorum Novembris III* (1910), pp. 878-89, especially p. 880, ch. 8.

[109] Constantinus VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae*, ed. I. I. Reiske, vol. 9-10, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: 1829), I, ch. 39, p. 198. Albert Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, vol. I-II (Paris: 1935), II, p. 7.

[110] Vogt, *Le Livre des Cérémonies* , II, ch. 49(40), p. 14.

Παρὰ Θεοῦ φιλανθρώπου ὑμεῖς ἐστέφθητε, Αὐγοῦσται, νοητῷ δὲ ἐλαίῳ ἐπευλογήθητε οὐρανόθεν εἰς χαρμοσύνην τοῦ λαοῦ ὑμῶν, θεοπρόβλητοι Αὐγοῦσται, καὶ εἰς κατάπτωσιν πάντων ἐναντίων.[1]

14.

Χαίπρει ὁ κόσμος ὁρῶν σε αὐτοκράτορα δεσπότην, καὶ ἡ πόλις σου τέρπεται, θεόστεπτε ὁ δεῖνα· ὡραΐζεται ἡ τάξις σε βλέπουσα ταξιάρχην, καί εὐτυχοῦσι τὰ σκῆπτρα, σκηπτοῦχον σε κεκτημένα. Κατακοσμεῖς γὰρ τὸν θρόνον τῆς πατρῴας βασιλείας σὺν τῇ Αὐγούστῃ, προπέμπων μαρμαρυγὰς εὐταξίας, ὅθεν εὐημεροῦσα διὰ σοῦ ἡ πολιτεία τῆς σῆς αὐτοκρατορίας ἑορτάζει τὴν ἡμέραν.[2]

15.

Λάμπουσιν οἱ δεσπόται, χαίρεται ὁ κόσμος· λάμπουσιν αἱ Αὐγοῦσται· χαίρεται ὁ κόσμος· ... Αὐγοῦσται, χαρὰ καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος ἡμῶν, ναί, Κύριε, πολλὰ των τὰ ἔτη.[3]

Excerpts from the Funeral Oration for Basil I by Leo VI

16.

Τοιαύτη δὴ οὖσα ἀπμόζεται ᾧ πρὸ γενέσεωη ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ἥπμοστο. Ὅσα μὲν δὴ καὶ οἷα περὶ βασιλείας κεχπημάτιστο αὐτῇ, πολλὰ ὄντα παρίημι (οὐ γάρ μοι σχολὴ περὶ τούτων ἀκριβολογεισται, τοῦτο δὲ οἶμαι οὗ δίκαιόν ἐστι παραλιπεῖν, ἵν' εἰδῆτε ὡς οὐκ ἄλλου τινός ἢ Θεοῦ τῷ ὄντι ἦν τὸ πρὸς γάμον ἐκείνου ταύτην ἐλθειν. Ἐκάλει μικρῷ πρόσθεν ἡ ὥρα τὸν κατ' ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ βασιλέα πρὸς γάμον καὶ συνηθροίζοντο ἀπαναταχόθεν αἱ κάλλει διαφέρουσαι, ἐν αἷσ καὶ αὕτη κατείλεκτο, καὶ ὅτι μὴ ἐκείνῳ ἀλλ' ἑτέρῳ ὑπὸ Θεοῦ δέδοτο, λιπὼ· τὴν ὅσον οὐδ' εἰπεῖν ἔστιν ἔχουσαν τὴν ὑπερβολήν, ἑτέραν ἠγάγετο.[4]

17.

Εἶχεν ἡ γνώμη τῷ κρατοῦντι δοῦναι κοινωνὸν τῷ πατρὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ ἐπεὶ ἐδέδοκτο, ἐχρῆν δὲ τῷ πάντων καλλίστῳ τὴν ὁμοίαν ἀπμόσαι, εὑρέθη δὴ αὕτη ἡ πασῶν γυναικῶν ἀρίστη, γένουσ μὲν δὴ οὐ τῶν πολὺ λειπομένων τῆς πρώτης τιμῆς ἐκφυεῖσα, κάλλους δ'ἕνεκα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα κόσμον γυναιξὶ φέρει τοσοῦτον ὑπερκειμένη, ὅσον οὐδ' εἰκάσαι τῷ λόγῳ ῥᾴδιον. Ἀκριβῶς γὰρ ἐῴκει μόνη φέρειν ἀποραοίητον τῆς δεσποτικῆς διαπλάσεως τὴν ὡραιότητα. Τίς μὲν οὖτον μελῶν ἔτυχε συμμετρίας; τίς δ' οὕτως τὴν χρόαν εἰς ἀκρίβειαν ἐκεράσατο, ὡς μηδὲν εἶ·αι ὃ περιττὸν

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[1] Ibid. , II, ch. 72(63), p. 91.
[2] Ibid. , II, ch. 72(63), pp. 91-92.
[3] Ibid. , II, ch. 74(65), p. 103.
[4] A. Vogt and S. I. Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basil I par son fils Léon le sage," *Orientalia Christiana* 26 (1932): 5-79, especially pp. 53-55.

δόξει καὶ οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον εἰς συντέλειαν τῆς ὅλης ὡραιότητος; ἃ γοῦν ἐν ἄλλαις κάλλιστα ἔχειν ἐνομίζετο, ταῦτα ἐκείνης ὀφθείσης εἰς κακίαν ἐμέμφετο.
Τοιαύτη δὴ οὖσα ἀπμόζεται ᾧ πρὸ γενέσεωη ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ἥπμοστο.[5]

[5] Ibid., p. 53.

APPENDIX C: BYZANTINE BRIDE SHOWS

The five reported bride-shows are set out in the chart below:[116]

Name	Year of marriage	Source	Date of source	Context[117]
Constantine VI and Maria of Amnia	788	*Life of St. Philaretos the Merciful*	821/2	encomium
Staurakios and Theophano	807	Theophanes' *Chronographia*	completed by 814	invective
Theophilos and Theodora	830	*Life of Theodora* Symeon the Logothete's chronicle	late 9th century after 948	encomium invective
Michael III and Eudokia Dekapolitissa	855	*Funeral Oration of Basil I* *Life of Irene of Chrysobalanton*	888 end of 10th century	encomium encomium
Leo VI and Theophano	882	*Life of Theophano*	early 10th century	encomium

The Origins of the Bride Show

No clear consensus exists in the scholarship about the origin of 8-9th century bride-shows. Treadgold argued that Irene established this custom as a response to the breaking of the marriage alliance between her son and the daughter of Charlemagne. Yet, he made this claim in the absence of any kind of textual evidence, and without addressing the obvious question why the *Chronicle of Theophanes*, generally interested in and sympathetic towards Irene, would not include a reference to the bride-show organized for her son, particularly if Irene established this custom even though it recorded the bride-

[116] See Judith Herrin and Lennart Rydén, "The Bride Shows at the Byzantine Court - History or Fiction?" (XIXth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Copenhagen, 1996), pp. 506-07.

[117] This is based on Martha Vinson's analysis of the bride-show as a rhetorical topos, see Martha Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 31-60.

show of Staurakios.[118] Hans also saw Irene as the originator of this custom, and suggested that she emulated the example of her predecessor Pulcheria. This suggestion appears to be more forceful, although Hans did not discuss how this information would have reached the court of Irene.[119] The information regarding the bride-show organized by Pulcheria is found in the 6th century *Chronicle of Malalas* and in the 7th c. anonymous *Chronicon Paschale*. Malalas' chronicle was one of the most popular and often quoted sources of the Middle Byzantine period, despite the fact that it only survives in one manuscript dating to c. 1100.[120] George Synkellos, the chief writer of the *Chronicle of Theophanes* made extensive use of Malalas, and so did a host of other chroniclers up to Manasses in the 12th century, thus its information was clearly available in the 8-10th century Constantinople.[121] While the *Chronicon Paschale* exerted little influence on later writers, it was copied in the 10th century therefore it must have garnered some interest at least at that time.[122] Moreover, there is a mention in the *Parastaseis Synthomoi Chronikai,* dated alternately to the 730s and the 770s, which alludes to the bride search in which Eudokia of Athens was discovered, indicating that this particular event was known

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[118] Warren T. Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* XLIX (1979): pp. 395-413. Earlier scholars conjectured that the bride-show was instituted by Irene the Khazar, the wife of Constantine V, see for example Steven Runciman, "Some Notes on the Role of the Empress," *Eastern Churches Review* 4, no. 2 (1972): pp. 119-24, especially pp. 120-121. There is however, no evidence to support this hypothesis.

[119] Linda-Marie Hans, "Der Kaiser als Märchenprinz. Brautschau und Heiratspolitik in Konstantinopel 395-882," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 38 (1988): pp. 33-52. Hans' argument could be strengthened by other information that is available about Irene's attempts to emulate Pulcheria, i.e. her role in participating in a church council in 787 just like Pulcheria did in 451, and the "finding" of the relics of Euphemia, a saint closely connected with the figure of Pulcheria, for according to several sources, Euphemia's relics made the decision on behalf of orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon, when two books, one containing the orthodox and the other the monophysite dogma were placed in her coffin, and the saint chose the orthodox book. For Irene's discovery of Euphemia's relics, see the report of Constantine of Tios, François Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédonie, Légendes Byzantines, Subsidia Hagiographica no. 41* (Bruxelles: 1965), pp. 101-103; for the restoration of the church of Euphemia by Irene and the miracle of the books, see the late eight and early ninth century text of Constantine of Tios in Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédonie, Légendes Byzantines* , pp. 93-95, and 97-99; the miracle of the books is also reported by the Synaxarion of Constantinople, see Hyppolite Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye, Acta Sanctorum, LXI, 1. Propyleum ad Acta Sanctroum Novembris.* (Bruxelles: 1902), pp. 811-813 and by Theodore Bestos (11th century), see Halkin, *Euphémie de Chalcédonie, Légendes Byzantines* , pp. 129-132. Also see John Wortley, "Iconoclasm and Leipsanoclasm: Leo III, Constantine V and the Relics," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1982): pp. 253-79, especially pp. 274-277.

[120] E. M. Jeffreys, "The Attitudes of Byzantine Chroniclers Towards Ancient History," *Byzantion* 49 (1979): pp. 199-238, especially pp. 215, 218. The text is found in Oxford, cod. Barocc. 182.

[121] For an overview of the influence Malalas exerted on subsequent writers of Byzantine chronicles such as the early seventh c. Johannes Antiochenus, the seventh c. *Chronicon Paschale*, the late seventh c. John of Nikiu, the anonymous *Ekloge Historion*, the eighth c. George Synkellos, the ninth century George the Monk, the tenth century Pseudo-Symeon, see ibid., pp. 229-232.

[122] Its earliest copy is found in Vat. gr. 1941, dating to the tenth century, see Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale, 284-628, Translated Texts for Historians 7* (Liverpool University Press, 1989), p. xiv.

in Constantinopolitan circles in the 8th century. The text states: "When it befell Eudokia the Athenian to be judged, she found good fortune through her beauty."[123]

Ludwig connected the reemergence of the bride-show motif in 9th century texts to the marriage of Theophilos and suggested that this event and some of its ceremonial trappings gave an impetus to Niketas' inclusion of the bride-show in the *Life of Philaretos*.[124] There are two difficulties with this suggestion. First, an extremely efficient communications network needs to be assumed between someone in the palace and Niketas in exile in the Peloponnesos in order for him to receive information about the marriage and include it in his hagiography in the same year (821), and second, it has been convincingly argued that Theophilos' marriage did not take place until 830.[125]

Vinson, on the other hand argued, that the origins of the Middle Byzantine bride-show lay with the invective of Nikephoros found in the *Chronicle of Theophanes*.[126] She, however, did not take into account the texts reporting about late antique bride-shows, which might have served as prototypes, and whose stories still circulated in the 8th century. Vinson assumed that because the first report of a bride-show survived in a text dating to c. 814, that this text constituted the beginning of the Middle Byzantine bride-show tradition. It is however, possible, although not provable that bride-shows of the late 8th and early 9th century were reported in sources earlier than 814, which do not survive. Yet, it is not necessary to postulate such sources for if the bride-show was a literary phenomenon, as Vinson argues, the late antique example of the bride search by Pulcheria could have served as an example for the 8-10th century bride-show narratives, as it was clearly well-known in Constantinople in this period. There is the further problem of the date and authorship of the paragraph that includes the description of Nikephoros' bride-show organized for Staurakios to which Speck drew attention.[127] If Speck is right, and this text was added to the *Chronicle of Theophanes* at a much later date – and he intimates decades – it could not have served as the impetus for the bride-show in the *Life of Philaretos* composed c. 821 as Vinson suggested. Even if the passage was part of the original text of Theophanes, one wonders, how Niketas, the author of the *Life of Philaretos* would have had access in his exile at the Peloponnesos to the newly composed *Chronicle of Theophanes*, for it has been suggested that Theophanes' chronicle did not become widely known until after the defeat of iconoclasm due to its strongly iconophile stance.[128] It is more likely that Niketas would have learned about the bride-show directly or indirectly from Malalas.

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[123] See ch. 64 in Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden: 1984), p. 141

[124] Claudia Ludwig, *Sonderformen byzantinischer Hagiographie und ihr literarisches Vorbild, Berliner Byzantinische Studien 3* (Frankfurt: 1997), p. 135.

[125] For the date of Theophilos' marriage in 821, see E. W. Brooks, "The Marriage of the Emperor Theophilos," *BZ* 10 (1901): pp. 540-45, who dates it to 821; for the more persuasive arguments of dating the marriage to 830, see Warren Treadgold, "The Problem of the Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16, no. 1 (1975): pp. 325-41.

[126] Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," especially 42-45.

[127] Paul Speck, "Eine Brautschau für Staurakios?" *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 49 (1999): pp. 25-30.

[128] Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , p. lxii.

One may draw the following conclusions regarding the origins of the Middle-Byzantine bride-show: it is far more likely that information circulating about the bride-show of Pulcheria derived from Malalas served as impetus for the composition of 9th century bride-show narratives, than the report in the *Chronicle of Theophanes* or the marriage ceremony of Theophilos. The evidence does not contradict placing the origins of the Middle-Byzantine bride-show as early as the reign of Irene, although admittedly no narrative of the 788 bride-show of Constantine VI exists from the 8th century. It is possible that an *epithalamic* poem recited during the marriage ceremonials of Constantine VI and Maria of Amnia would have revived the motif of the bride-show, perhaps under the influence of Malalas, in order to praise the bride and this theme was later on picked up by hagiographers and chroniclers. Given Maria's obscure background this would have been an appropriate way to celebrate the bride.

History of the Transmission and Audience of the Middle Byzantine Bride-Show Motif

To establish who the readers or listeners of the anecdotes of imperial bridal pageants might have been in medieval Byzantium, I will discuss what we know about the use of the texts and the manuscripts in which they survive. The *Chronicle of Theophanes*, provides the first, albeit brief description of a bride-show. This work was most likely completed by 814, but it has been suggested that it may not have circulated widely before the end of the iconoclastic controversy (843) due to its staunch iconophile bias.[129] The chronicle survives in two 9th century manuscripts that appear to have been produced in the same scriptorium, which suggested to Mango and Wilson that the work was popular and might have been copied in large numbers.[130] The chronicle is also extant in a Latin translation completed in Rome in 871-874. Further manuscripts transmit the Greek text: a 10th and an 11th century copy,[131] another from the 11/12th century,[132] two from the 12th century,[133] four from the 16th century.[134] Thus the transmission history of Theophanes' chronicle demonstrates that it was a popular and widely consulted work. This is also shown by its frequent use by other authors. The historian George the Monk used it for his own work in the late 9th century, while in the same period the hagiographer of the *Life of St. Theodore of Chora* also copied it, so did the author of the *Life of the Holy Empress Irene* adding very few changes to the original text,[135] while Constantine

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[129] Ibid. , p. lxii.

[130] Ibid. , p. xcviii, they also speculated that the ninth century copies might have been produced in the monastery where Theophanes composed his work and where he was laid to rest. The two ninth century texts of the chronicle are: Vatican gr. 155 and Christ Church, cod. Wake 5.

[131] The tenth century text is found in Paris gr. 1710; the eleventh century copy is Paris gr. 1711.

[132] Vatican gr. 978.

[133] Vatican gr. 154 and Paris Coislin 133.

[134] Vatican Barberini 553, Paris gr. 1709, Vatican Palat. 395, Monac. gr. 391.

[135] It is worth noting that the wife of Theophanes retired to the convent on Prinkipo, where the empress Irene was burried. The strong dependence of the Vita of Irene on the Chronicle of Theophanes may perhaps be explained by the direct connection between the two monasteries through Theophanes and his wife. Mango and Wilson quote some evidence that indicates that there may have been correspondence between Theophanes and his wife during their retirement to their respective monasteries, see Mango and

Porphyrogennetos' *De Administrando Imperio* of the 10th c. also extensively quotes it,[136] to mention a few. Theophanes' work was therefore well-know and widely available in various circles of Byzantine society, from the imperial court to provincial monastic hagiographers.

The *Life of Philaretos the Merciful*[137] contains the chronologically first bride-show and was written by Philaretos' grandson, Niketas. The text has two main recensions, one in a more demotic the other in a more literary style. The two chief manuscripts of the different recensions are: Paris, Bibl. Nat. 1510, which Vasiliev assigned to the 10th century but Fourmy and Leroy dated to the 12th century; and Genoa, Bibl. Franz. 34, dated to the 11th century, although Bonis regarded both manuscripts to be from the 12th century.[138] Rydén proposed that the text of the Genoa manuscript is the more ancient and was revised in the 10th century to produce the version found in the Paris manuscript.[139] Kazhdan and Sherry, however, would prefer to treat the two recensions as contemporaneous (?) 'doublets.'[140] In addition to the Paris and Genoa documents, Fourmy and Leroy listed forty other existing manuscripts of the vita, of which six come from the Byzantine period (one from the 11th century, one from the 12th century, one from the 13th century, and three from the 14th century), two from the 15th century, and the rest from the 16-18th centuries.[141] Although the dating of the two chief manuscripts that contain the divergent recensions and the date of the composition of the two versions of the text is still debated, it appears that the vita was probably read widely both in humble and more cultivated circles. This is supported by the existence of the stylistically divergent recensions produced some time in the 9th or 10th centuries and by the other copies produced in the 11-13th centuries. The Life may have been read annually on the

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Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , p. xlv, n. 14. Treadgold believes that the vita of Irene was composed later, because it refers to Paphlagonia as a theme, which was not the case before 815/826, and does not think it likely that it could have been composed before 843, and suggests a date of composition ca. 861-4, when Irene's body may have been moved from Prinkipo to Constantinople, see Warren Treadgold, "The Unpublished Saint's Life of the Empress Irene (BHG 2205)," *Byzantinische Forschungen* (1982): pp. 231-51.

[136] Mango and Scott, eds., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* , pp. xcvii-xcviii.

[137] Marie-Henriette Fourmy and Maurice Leroy, "La vie de S. Philarète," *Byzantion* 9 (1934): pp. 85-167; Lennart Rydén, *Life of St Philaretos the Merciful Written By His Grandson Niketas, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia No. 8* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2002). Kazhdan and Sherry left open the question whether Philaretos was a noble man or rather the well-to-do son of a farmer, but suggested that the term *eugenes* (noble) more likely refers to his moral standard than his social status, see Alexander Kazhdan and L. F. Sherry, "The Tale of the Happy Fool: The Vita of St. Philaretos the Merciful (BHG 1511z-1512b)," *Byzantion* 66 (1996): pp. 351-62, especially p. 358; for further discussion of Philaretos's social standing, see Rydén, *Life of St Philaretos the Merciful Written By His Grandson Niketas* , pp. 26-28, who believes Philaretos to be of noble origin.

[138] See Kazhdan and Sherry, "The Tale of the Happy Fool: The Vita of St. Philaretos the Merciful (BHG 1511z-1512b)," pp. 351-2, with references to the work of Vasiliev and Bonis.

[139] Lennart Rydén, "The Revised Verision of the 'Life of St. Philaretos the Merciful' and the 'Life of St. Andreas Salos'," *Analecta Bollandiana* 100 (1982): pp. 485-95, especially pp. 485, 494.

[140] Kazhdan and Sherry, "The Tale of the Happy Fool: The Vita of St. Philaretos the Merciful (BHG 1511z-1512b)," p. 352: "Until the problem [i.e. the phenomenon of literary doublets] finds its solution in a general way it is safer to accept only the simple fact that the Vita of Philaretos exists in two versions, one more 'demotic' and another more 'literary.'" Fourmy and Leroy, on the other hand postulated a common prototype for the two recensions, see Fourmy and Leroy, "La vie de S. Philarète," p. 91.

[141] Fourmy and Leroy, "La vie de S. Philarète," pp. 86-88.

feast day of St. Philaretos on December 1, however, the abbreviated vita of the saint found in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* does not contain a reference to the bride-show.[142]

The *Life and Encomium of the Blessed and Holy Empress Theodora* was most likely written in the late 9th century by an author whose identity has not been possible to establish. [143] It has been suggested that it was composed as 'an inaugural sermon' introducing Theodora's feast day into the church calendar after 867, which would indicate that the vita came out of court circles.[144] Markopoulos suggested that the life was written between 867 (death of Michael III) and 871 (after which the *Chronicle of George the Monk* was composed) because of the obvious connections between the two texts.[145] Afinogenov, on the other hand, argued that Theodora's vita is a later text than George's chronicle and that it uses the chronicle as its source, and also argued, that the motif of the bride-show goes back to an even earlier source that comes out of the iconophile circle of the patriarch Methodios c. 843-847.[146] Regardless of the dating controversy of the Life, Vinson's conclusion about its impetus remains valid: "the evidence provided by both the form and the content of the Life indicates that this work was authorized at the very highest level of the political and religious establishment."[147] The Life survives in three manuscripts, the earliest dates to 3 August 1111 and was

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[142] The Menologion of Basil II shows the burial of Philaretos on p. 218 for December 2 and the text makes no reference to the bride-show, see ODB, II, 1650; PG 117, p. 188. The Synaxarion of Constantinople simply mentions that when Constantine married Maria, the granddaughter of Philaretos, the saint came into riches, see Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , p. 269.

[143] BHG 1731. For the Greek text, see W. Regel, "Récit sur l'empereur Théophile et l'impératrices Théodora concernant le rétablissment du culte des saintes images," *Analecta Byzantino-Russica* (1891): pp. 1-43, especially pp. 1-19, A. Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," *Symmeikta* 5 (1983): pp. 249-85. It has been recently translated and analyzed by Martha P. Vinson, see Alice-Mary Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation, Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), pp. 353-382; Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show." Also see: Martha Vinson, "The Terms enkolpion and tenantion and the Conversion of Theophilus in the Life of Theodora (BHG 1731)," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 36, no. 1 (1995): pp. 89-99; Alenxander Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995): pp. 45-56, no. 13. There is also a so-called second redaction of Theodora's Life, first published by F. Combefis, *Historia haeresis monothelitarum* (Paris: 1648), 715E-743A. The second reduction contains sections 5-8, and parts of sections 9-10, thus it does not include the narrative of the bride-show, see Martha P. Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," in *Byzantine Defenders of Images. Eigth Saints' Lives in English Translation*, ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, *Byzantine Saints' Lives in Translation II* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), pp. 360-82, especially p. 354, n. 4. An abbreviated version of the vita is found in the Menologion of Basil II, on f. 392, PG 117, pp. 209-210, which does not mention the bride-show either.

[144] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," pp. 354-355. Dating is based on the fact that Michael III, who was assassinated in 867, is referred to in the text as deceased, although without mentioning his name.

[145] Ibid. , p. 355, n. 5.

[146] Dimitry Afinogenov, "The Bride-show of Theophilos: Some Notes on the Sources," *Eranos* 95 (1997): pp. 10-18, especially pp. 15-17. Ibid. he states: "The story of the bride-show in any case has to be regarded as one of the scattered pieces of Methodian proaganda, re-used later to serve other purposes than the initial one."

[147] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 356.

intended to be read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy,[148] the second dates to the 13th century,[149] while the third is found in a manuscript from 1307.[150] Although the small number of surviving manuscripts indicates that the Life of Theodora does not appear to have been as popular as the previous two texts, this may be due to accidents of survival, for Vinson discerned the influence of the *Life of Theodora* on two saints Lives that also contain the narrative of the bride-show, the *Life of Theophano* (c. 900) and the *Life of Irene of Chrysoblanton* (late 10th c.), which suggests a popularity of Theodora's story in the late 9th and 10th century.[151] Moreover, since the vita of Theodora may have been read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy suggests that it could have been heard at least once a year by a wide audience.[152] However, it is not clear when the reading of Theodora's vita was introduced into the celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy. The Sunday of Orthodoxy commemorates the defeat of iconoclasm in 843 with the leadership of Theodora, and was an established feast by the end of the 9th century.[153] Even if the reading of the Life of Theodora at the Feast of Orthodoxy cannot be conclusively dated before the early 12th century, Vinson remarked that: "given Theodora's role in the restoration of icons and the prominence this event receives in our Life, it would not be inappropriate for her sainthood to be proclaimed on the Feast of Orthodoxy."[154] It has also been demonstrated that Theodora was an important figure for the ideology of the Macedonian dynasty, for although she was from the ill-fated Amorian line, through her exemplary orthodoxy (as victor over iconoclasm) she provided a link to the dynasty that the Macedonians supplanted.[155] Therefore, at least in imperial circles, Theodora was venerated, from the late 9th century on, and possibly in the context of the celebration of the Feast of Orthodoxy, in which the whole populace of the city would have participated. The Menologion of Basil II c. 1000 commemorates Theodora, however, the text of her *synaxis* does not contain a reference to the bride-show.[156]

The historian Symeon Magister also recorded the story of Theodora's bride-show in the 10th century,[157] and nearly identical accounts are found in the related chronicles of

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[148] British Museum (Add. 28270, ff. 1-16v). It was signed and dated by the scribe Nicolaos. Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," , pp. 254-257.

[149] Vatican Library 2014, ff. 136v-143 does not contain the full text of the Life. Markopoulos, "Bios tes autokrateiras Theodoras (BHG 1731)," , p. 256, especially no. 1.

[150] Messina Biblioteca Universitaria, San Salvatore 30, ff. 227-232v. It was completed by the monk David. Ibid., p. 255, especially no. 7 and Talbot, ed., *Byzantine Defenders of Images.Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation* , p. 354.

[151] Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," pp. 55-58.

[152] In fact, Vinson pointed out that the relatively simple sentence structure of the Life suggests that it was intended for oral delivery, see Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 355.

[153] The Feast of Orthodoxy is mentioned in the *Kletorologion of Philotheos* (dating to 899), see J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System in the Ninth Century* (New York: 1911), pp. 165-166 and Nicolas Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe at Xe siècles* (Paris: 1972), pp. 194-195, with French translation; it is also mentioned in Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* , I, ch, 28, pp. 156-60. Yet the Typikon of Hagia Sophia does not mention it, and it is only introduced into the Synaxarion of Constantinople relatively late.

[154] Vinson, "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," p. 355.

[155] See Ibid. , pp. 355-356 and Karlin-Hayter, "L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe s." p. 103-108.

[156] PG 117, pp. 209-210.

[157] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp. 624f.

Leo Grammatikos (10/11th c.), Theodosios Melissenos (10th c.), and the continuator of George the Monk (10th c.). As Rochow has pointed out, the historian Zonaras, from the first half of the 12th century also related the story using probably Symeon Magister as his main source, and in turn Michael Glykas in the 12th century and the chronicle of Ephraim in the 14th c. both go directly back to Zonaras in relating Theodora's bride-show. A late redaction of the Patria also mentions this bride-show, which appears to go back to the chroniclers.[158] Thus, the story of Theodora's bride-show could be encountered in two contexts: during a religious feast possibly as early as the late 9th century, and in the work of court historians from the 10th century on. It is therefore clear that in the Middle-Byzantine period the anecdote about Theodora was well known in imperial, patriarchal, and intellectual circles in Constantinople, but it probably also reached the lower echelons of the populace.

The *Funeral Oration* written by Leo VI in 888, to commemorate the demise of his father, Basil I, two years after his death survives in one manuscript only.[159] This speech contains a brief description of the bride-show held for Michael III, Basil's predecessor, in which Leo's mother, Eudokia Ingerina competed but did not win due to divine intervention, for she was 'reserved' for Basil. It is not clear on what occasion this text was delivered,[160] but it indicates yet another use of the motif in an imperial context.

The *Life of Theophano*, the first wife of Leo VI, survives in two versions. An anonymous author, who most likely was her contemporary and an acquaintance of her family, wrote the first vita in the late 9th or early 10th century,[161] while the second is the work of the 14th century author Nikephoros Gregoras, the latter, however, does not recount the bride-show.[162] Regrettably, the anonymous vita survives only in two 14th century manuscripts in Florence and Gothenburg both of which contain primarily lives of female saints, and thus cannot offer information about the reception of the Life in the Middle Byzantine period.[163] There are, however, other pieces of evidence, namely two

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[158] Ilse Rochow, *Studien zur der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia, Berliner Byzantinische Arbeiten 38* (Berlin: 1967), pp. 5-10, with further references and analysis of specific passages from the various authors containing the bride-show narrative.

[159] Athos, Vatopedi 360 or L 408. The manuscript has been variously dated to the tenth and late eleventh century, see Vogt and Hausherr, "Oraison funèbre de Basil I par son fils Léon le sage," p. 6.

[160] Ibid., p. 8.

[161] BHG 1794. Alexakis argued that the suppression of events related to Leo's affair with Zoe Zaoutzaina in Theophano's vita may provide a date for the completion of the vita before the death of the protagonists concerned in the events (Zaoutes died in 899, Zoe in 900, and Leo in 912), see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," p. 55. Costa-Louillet argued that the Vita of Theophano must have been written by an author who had known the empress and her family and must have been completed before the death of Leo VI in 912. G. da Costa-Louillet, "Saint de Constantinople aux VIIIe, IXe et Xe siècles," 24, 25-27 (1954): pp. 179-263, 453-511, 784-852, especially pp. 823-836.

[162] See Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," , pp. 25-45. For a discussion of this text, see Alice-Mary Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period" (The Twilight of Byzantium. Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire, Princeton University, 1989), pp. 15-26.

[163] Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. gr. Magliabechianus 50 (Conv. Soppr. B. 1. 1214); Gothenburg, cod. Gr. 4, (olim Kephallenia, Argostolion, cod. 3). On the Florence manuscript see: A. Oliveri, "Indices codicum graecorum Magliabechianorum supplementum," *Studi ital. Di filol. Class* 5 (1897): pp. 413-15, H. Delehaye, "Vita sanctae Olympiadis et narratio Sergiae de eiusdam translatione," *Analecta Bollandiana* 15

marginal notes in a manuscript of Lucian at the Vatican Library,[164] that inform us about the origins of the cult of Theophano. The *scholia* are scribbled next to the narration that describes the rising veneration of the friend of Alexander the Great, Hephaestion, and compare the outrageous and politically motivated promotion of Hephaestion to a god and Theophano to a saint: "the same thing has also happened in our time and everybody is seized by a hysteria characteristic of women so as to proclaim the emperor's [late wife] Theophano a saint" and "the *magister* Slokakas stirred to frenzy the emperor Leo about Theophano by relating numbers of supernatural dreams and cures, so that he could ... thrive by telling lies."[165] It has been argued that these marginal notes were composed during the reign of Leo VI, and that Slokakas was the author of Theophano's vita.[166] While it is questionable that Slokakas composed the vita, the statement attests to widespread knowledge and interest about the deceased Theophano during the reign of Leo VI. That 'everybody is seized by a hysteria' is no doubt an exaggeration, yet it indicates the existence of a popular movement that championed the elevation of Theophano to sainthood.[167] While this evidence can not prove that people who promoted Theophano's sanctity were familiar with the anecdote about her victory in the bride-show, it is likely that they would know about it, since her vita appears to have emerged from this movement; the vita either seized upon stories about her that already circulated in the city or forged them. The author of Theophano's vita, who clearly had connections to the court of Leo VI,[168] may have remembered that Theophano's husband, Leo VI, used the motif of the bride-show to praise his mother, albeit in a different context, and thus chosen a motif that was familiar in Leo's court. Vinson suggested that the *Funeral Oration* of Leo inspired the author of Theophano's vita in his use of the role of divine providence, and argued that the *Life of Theodora* influenced the structure of its narrative, while some of its motifs were based on the *Life of Philaretos*.[169] These

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(1896): pp. 406-08, and A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* (Leipzig: 1936-1939), III, 912-913. On the Gothenburg manuscript see: Spyridon Lampros, "Treis kodikes en Kephallenia," *Neos Hell.* 6 (1909): pp. 322-27; Fançois Halkin, "Le ménologe grec de Gothenbourg," *Analecta Bollandiana* 60 (1942): pp. 216-20, Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche* , pp. 909-912, and T. Kleberg, *Catalogus codicum graecorum et latinorum universitatis Gothoburgensis*, 2nd ed. ed., vol. 16, *Acta Bibliothecae Univerisitatis Gothoburgensis* (Gothenburg: 1974). The manuscripts are dated to the fourteenth century based on their paleography; for an analysis of the usage and intended audience of these manuscripts, see Claudia Rapp, "Figures of Female Sanctity: Byzantine Edifying Manuscripts and Their Audience," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): pp. 313-44, especially pp. 317, 319-320.

[164] Vat. Gr. 1322.

[165] The scholia are found in Vat. Gr. 1322, see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," pp. 54-56. For the scholia, see: H. Rabe, "Die Überlieferung der Lukianscholien," *Nachrichten von der König. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1902): pp. 718-36, especially pp. 725-726; H. Rabe, *Scholia in Lucianum* (Leipzig: 1906), pp. 26/29-27/6.

[166] The expression "in our time" led Alexakis to the conclusion that the author of the note was a contemporary of Leo VI, see Alexakis, "Leo VI, Theophano, A Magistros Called Slokakas, and the Vita Theophano (BHG 1794)," p. 47 no. 9.

[167] Ibid., p. 56.

[168] He was an acquaintance of the uncle of Theophano, Martinos Martinakios, who was *artiklines* of the court, see Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rethoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," p. 59.

[169] Ibid., p. 58.

connections between the texts indicate that bride-show narratives were popular and circulated widely in Constantinople.

A short version of Theophano's vita is found in the *Synaxarion Sirmondi*[170] from the 11th century, whose text derives from the anonymous vita, as demonstrated by passages that agree verbatim between the two. It contains a somewhat oblique reference to the bride-show: "Since the time of her age has advanced, she advanced among girls of similar (age?) and was better than the older ones; (at this time) there was a search after fair-faced and virtuous girls. And the emperors found in her all the most beautiful things gushing forth, and they joined her to their son, Leo, the emperor."[171] The *Menologion of Basil II*,[172] dated to the last quarter of the 10th century contains an even more abbreviated version of the life of Theophano and does not mention the bride-show, unless the statement: "And when the famous emperor Basil decided [to find] a wife for his son Leo the most wise, not finding a better candidate than her, he married her to him" was intended as a reference to the bride-show. The story about Theophano's bride-show appears to have been well-known in the court and in the city of Constantinople during the reign of Leo VI, and it probably was not forgotten in the course of the 10th and 11th centuries, for Theophano was commemorated in the *Menologion of Basil II*, and was also included in the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*.

The *Life of Irene of Chrysobalanton* describes the bride-show of Michael III, and survives in seven manuscripts dating between the 13th and early 17th centuries.[173] All surviving manuscripts of Irene's Life appear to be for liturgical usage, and at least three of them seem to have been used in monastic settings, yet unfortunately the evidence provided by the manuscript recension does not allow one to trace back to usage of this text to the Middle Byzantine period.[174] Rosenquist argued persuasively, that internal evidence of the text indicates that the vita addressed the emperor, Basil II in order to gain his favor for the Gouber family while it also served the interest of the convent of

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[170] Cod. Beroliensis. Phillipps. 1622, f. 107, see Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," pp. 46-48; Delehaye, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae e Codice Sirmondiano, nunc Beroliensi, Adictis Synaxariis Selectis Opera et Studio Hippolyti Delehaye* , pp. 314-316.

[171] Kurtz, "Zwei griechische Texte über die heilige Theophano, die Gemahlin Kaisers Leo VI," p. 46/16-19. The expression "search after fair-faced . . . girls" is taken from the Life of Theophano, ibid ch. 8, p. 5/3

[172] PG 117, pp. 209-210.

[173] Athos, Stavronikita 18, f. 397-426, 13th c.; Athos, Vatopedi 93, 13th c.; Athos, Patokrator 6, f. 249-264v, 14th c.; Florence, Laurentianus X 31, f. 249-303v, 15th c.; Athos, Koutloumousiou 208, f. 178-198, 15th c.; Athos, Iviron 905, f. 1-45, 15th c.; Athos, Dionysiou 151, f. 45-81, 20 July 1610, see Jan Olof Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* (Uppsala: 1986), pp. il-lv.

[174] Two of the manuscripts can be directly connected with Constantinople: an aristocratic woman, Anna-Antonia Komnene Rhaulaina Strategopoulina commissioned Pantokrator 6 and donated it to her convent in Constantinople, see ibid. , p. lii, as noted on f.3 of the manuscript. Laurentianus X 31 was also copied in Constantinople, see Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* , p. lv. This manuscript contains the formulas "despota eulogeson" and "eulogeson pater" at the beginning of the texts, which seem to suggest a monastic context. Dionysiou 151 was copied by the hieromonk Ignatios from the Dionysiou monastery, see Rosenquist, *The Life of St. Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices* , p. l.

Chrysobalanton, which may have been founded by a female member of this family. Whether or not the vita was known outside these imperial and aristocratic circles in the Middle Byzantine period cannot be established, however, the later flourish of the manuscript tradition may indicate that Irene's vita was a phenomenon of some renown. As its literary model, Irene's vita used the *Life of Theodora* and *Life of Philaretos*, providing evidence that these texts and their stories were in circulation in the late 10th century.

APPENDIX D: EMPRESSES OF THE LATE SEVENTH THROUGH THE MID-NINTH CENTURIES

In the period that precedes the era discussed in this dissertation, i.e. between 641 and 780 there were fifteen empresses (including Irene the Athenian) about whose existence we know.[175] The names of four of these women are unknown, and very little information is available about most of them. In this period empresses did not appear on coins and no seals of imperial women survive. Even before 641, from about the last quarter of the 6th century, empresses only appeared on coins at the beginning of the reigns of their husbands. They were shown standing or enthroned together with their consorts, yet their names were not inscribed, which clearly indicates that empresses lost their prestige in representing the empire, for they no longer appeared independently on the official imagery of imperial coinage.[176] The 8th century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* provides one reference to an image of an empress from this period when it mentions the statue group of Justinian II and his second wife, although without giving her name.[177] The lack of information about empresses to some degree can be ascribed to the generally meager evidence that survives for this period, frequently characterized as the 'dark ages' of Byzantium.[178] Moreover, after the demise of the Heraklian dynasty with the deposition of Justinian II (first in 695, and again in 711), emperors came and went with great frequency, often not remaining in office for more than two years until the political situation was finally stabilized by Leo III (717-741), who established the new Isaurian dynasty. It is not surprising that in the period between 695 and 717 we hear little to nothing about empresses and it is in these decades that the four anonymous empresses are found. Yet, it is noteworthy that even during the long reigns of the emperors at the beginning and end of this era (e.g. Constans II 641-668, Constantine VI 668-685, Leo III 717-741, Constantine V 741-775) little is recorded about the empresses,[179] particularly since many of these women were of important origin, at least this is suggested by the information available about those of whom we know more than merely their name.

Thus, Fausta, the wife of Constans II was the daughter of the Armenian general, Valentinos Arsakuni, who was a powerful figure of Constantinopolitan politics of the

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[175] See Appendix A: List of Empresses.

[176] Leslie Brubaker and Helen Tobler, "The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324-802)," *Gender and History* 12, no. 3 (2000): pp. 572-94.

[177] "The gilt statue (*agalma*) of a man in the golden-roofed Basilica colonnade (where the measure of the Emperor Heraclius [610-40] was set up) – the kneeling one, is of Justinian when he was tyrant of Constantinople of the second time [705-11], and next to him is his wife, the sister of Ivouzeros Glivanos, after the defeat of Tiberius Apsimar [695-705], when Philippicus [the emperor, 711-13] also was censured in that part of the golden-roofed Basilica. Tervel of Bulgaria and Glivanos the Khazar took their places there on many occasions, and so large payments of tribute were made here, at the site of the statues (agalmata) of the tyrant and his wife. With these stands a huge elephant. . . ." Chapter 37, Cameron and Herrin, eds., *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* , pp. 97-99, and pp. 210-212 for commentary on the passage.

[178] For a brief overview of the written sources of the period see, George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers Universty Press, 1957), pp. 87-92, 147-152.

[179] The two chief sources for the period, the *Chronicle of Theophanes* (c. 814) and the *Historia Synthomos* of the patriarch Nikephoros (775-787) provide precious little information about empresses in the period from 641 to 780.

640s, for he had great influence on imperial succession after the death of Herakleios, and he himself had aspirations for the throne;[180] the second wife of Justinian II was Theodora, the sister of the Khazar khagan, to whose court Justinian fled during his exile after his deposition from the throne in 795;[181] Artavasdus, a general from the Armeniakon theme married Anna, the daughter of Leo III as a reward for his support of Leo's accession to the throne in 717;[182] the first wife of Constantine V was the daughter of the Khazar khagan, Irene, which resulted from a political alliance between the emperor and the khagan;[183] while the third wife of Constantine V was Eudokia, the sister of Michael Melissenos, the strategos of the Anatolikon theme.[184] Thus five among the fifteen empresses of this period had important political capital to bring to their spouses, yet the sources intimate that they had little influence on the actual exercise of power once they were married. One wonders whether the other empresses about whom we have virtually no information namely Anastasia, Eudokia, Irene, the two Marias, and the four anonymous empress, have been left out of the historical record because they themselves were of obscure origin, or rather because empresses had less influence in this epoch than in previous and later periods, and consequently less interest was lavished on them. Considering what evidence is available about coins and seals, images in other media, and what we know about the role of women in the religious life of the empire in this period, the second conclusion appears to be correct, namely: empresses had little visible influence and authority in the period 641-780.

It is from this context of obscurity that Irene the Athenian (780-802) emerged and gained political power first as regent and later as independent sovereign. It is possible, that the political position achieved by Irene may have sparked, albeit indirectly, an interest in how one becomes an empress, which may have spawned the bride-show as a response. Yet the bride-show motif kept the discourse about empresses within the traditional realms, perhaps specifically in order to advocate a different view of the imperial office in which women started to gain a considerably more significant position than can be discerned in the period before. In opposition to the Isaurian period, when imperial succession ran clearly through the male line, in the period following the demise of Irene, women acquired an essential role in imperial succession in order to substitute for the lacking direct male line. But more than just exercising influence on succession, empresses of this period also had greater influence in the exercise of political power, which however was not acknowledged, but rather even countered, in bride-show narratives.

In the period between the fall of Irene (802) and the establishment of the Amorian dynasty (820) the practice of dynastic succession broke down and the 18 year long period saw five different emperors on the throne, four of them ascended as usurpers: Nikephoros I (802-811), his son Staurakios (July – October, 811), Michael I Rhangabe (811-13), Leo V the Armenian (813-20), and Michael II the Amorian (820-829). Nikephoros, who may

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[180] ODB III, p. 2151; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* , p. 113; Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , pp. 309-311.
[181] ODB II, 1084; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* , p. 142, Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , 340.
[182] ODB I, p. 192. Artavasdus also ruled briefly in 741-743 after the death of Leo III.
[183] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 35.
[184] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

have been Irene's brother-in-law, was one of her chief financial officials, the *logothete* of the *genikon*, responsible for tax collection, and as such he clearly had direct access to Irene, which, as Herlong pointed out, facilitated his ability to seize the throne. Only Nikephoros and Staurakios were direct blood relatives of each other among the five rulers, and none of them were descendants of the previous dynasty, yet they forged connections to the Isaurian house and to one anther in other ways. Their mutual relationships formed a tangled web that included links both through the male and female lines. Herlong hypothesized, based on evidence recorded in the 10th century, that Nikephoros I may have been a brother-in-law of Irene (the husband of her sister)[185] but even if this was not the case, Nikephoros recognized the importance of kinship with his predecessor, and married his son, Staurakios to a relative of Irene, Theophano in 807.[186] Although this dynastic marriage did not have the political stamina to keep Staurakios on the throne for long after his father's death, it indicates that Irene, the last ruler of the Isaurian dynasty, had acquired the kind of symbolic authority that could be tapped into to legitimize her imperial successor.

The emperors following Nikephoros and Staurakios (Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II) all served as military officers during Nikephoros' reign. Moreover, Michael I was also the son-in-law of Nikephoros; he had been married to Nikephoros' daughter, Prokopia for c. 20 years at the time of his accession in 811. Michael I was deposed and followed on the throne by his own *synteknos* (godfather of one of his children), Leo V. Leo V was also godfather to the son of the next emperor who followed him, Michael II.[187] Scholars disagree on whether Leo V had two wives, or his wife was known by two different names, Theodosia and Varka. Theodosia was the daughter of an influential official, Arsaber who was even elevated as emperor in an ill-fated coup against Nikephoros I,[188] and the sources attribute great influence to her. Michael II's first wife, Thekla was the daughter of Bardanios Tourkos, another powerful general with imperial ambitions, who for a period was an ally of Leo the Armenian and Michael the Amorian. Bardanios was elevated as emperor by his troops in 803 – a plot in which Leo the Armenian and Michael the Amorian also participated initially - but without ultimate success.[189] Treadgold suggested based on a story related by the 10th century chroniclers Genesios[190] and Theophanes Continuatus[191] that Thekla, the wife of Michael the Amorian

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[185] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[186] For Staurakios and Theophano, see ibid., pp. 49-50; Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* (Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 152-155, 174-177; ODB III, pp. 1945-1946.

[187] For Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 50-52, 53-56, pp. 63-65; and ODB II, pp. 1362, 1209-1210, 1363; for Leo V and Michael II also see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , pp. 196-225, 223-262.

[188] For a view that Varka (or Barka) and Theodosia were different women, see Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , p. 199, n. 265. Herlong, on the other hand believes that Theodosia was occasionally referred to as Varka, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" , p. 56, n. 197.

[189] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 63, 65.

[190] Genesios, Book 2, ch. 1: ". . . but rather he [i.e. Michael II] was emboldened by many occurrences and predictions, especially by the prophesies of a certain Athinganian seer, who had often given proof of his powers to the commander at that time of the Anatolikon theme. He had indicated to him, making a clear prophecy, that Michael and another one of his officers would wear the crown. Wherefore the commander paid special attention to these two men, and desired to marry them to his daughters. With this purpose in mind, when on one occasion the man in charge of the list of dinner guests (whom they call the *atriklines*)

was the sister of Varka, the wife of Leo the Armenian,[192] however, Herrin believed this to be a 'romantic legend' and pointed out that on the one hand neither narrative contains the name of any of the principle figures, on the other hand the contemporary chronicler Theophanes did not relate these events in his history.[193] The second wife of the Amorian Michael II was the princess Euphrosyne, the daughter of Constantine VI and granddaughter of the empress Irene, who lived in monastic retirement until her marriage to Michael II.[194] Theophilos, the son of Michael II married Theodora, the paternal niece of Manouel, who served as *protostrator* during the reign of Michael I, and also served as *strategos* under Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilos. Sources report that Manouel was included in the regency council after the death of Theophilos. Theodora's father, Marinos a less important position in the imperial hierarchy than his brother Manouel; he was *tourmarch* and *droungarios* of Paphlagonia.[195]

It is clear from this tangled web of blood and spiritual kinships and alliances that the emperors of the early 9th century emerged from similar backgrounds in similar ways. Their service of the reigning emperor and their personal connections and alliances helped them greatly to achieve their positions, however, the evidence also indicates that women were perceived as important links in power alliances both on the imperial level and in the circles of the elite. Thus, Nikephoros had access to the palace and to Irene because he was her finance minister, yet as Herlong hypothesized, it is possible that as her brother-in-law he had an even more intimate access to the imperial residence and the empress, which may have facilitated his coup. Nikephoros also recognized the importance of

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entered and showed him the list as was customary, the commander said that he did not want any others to participate in the banquet, but that only those two men should be allowed to share his table. When the latter had been laid, he instructed his daughters to join the group and ordered the men to recline beside them. They were struck by the unexpectedness of the honor and refused to take their places. But his mind was set and he put even more pressure on them, in the end persuading them to do so. Much merriment then ensued, and after they had finished eating, the commander offered them his daughters as wives. This request made them swoon, and for a while they declined on the grounds that they were not worthy, especially Michael, because he had sprung from a very poor and quite undistinguished family. But in the end they complied with the demand." For the translation, see Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis, *Byzantina Australiensia 11* (Canberra: 1998), pp. 27-28.

[191] Bekker, ed., *Theophanes Continuatus* , pp. 44-45, related the story in the following manner: "Once while he (Michael II) was standing near his *strategos*, catching the commander's attention because of his stammer, a certain Athinganos, who was a confidant of the *strategos*, declared that this Michael and another fellow would soon be famous and achieve the imperial power itself before long. The *strategos* warmed up to these men, as if making an investment, but because of his slowness of mind, did not avoid the situation, which would not be easy or simple to do again. A table was set up on the spot, and ignoring all others, he invited these men to the festivities. As the drink flowed, the strategos brought out his daughters and promised them to the men as brides, at first shocking them into speechlessness by the strangeness of the affair. But afterwards they accepted and agreed and conceded him to be a god rather than a man." For the translation, see Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 60.

[192] Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* , p. 433, n. 8, Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780-843* , p. 198, n. 263.

[193] Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* , p. 151, n. 47.

[194] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," pp. 43-44, 65; Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* , pp. 130-184, especially pp. 155-158.

[195] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959," p. 64, 121-124, 131-134; for Theodora, also see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204* , pp. 95-108; Herrin, *Women in Purple. Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* , pp. 185-239.

dynastic alliance in legitimizing one's power, and to this end he married his son to Theophano, a relative of his predecessor. It is clear, that Michael I was able to ascend the throne because he was married to Prokopia, the daughter and sister of his predecessors. Similarly, Michael II recognized the importance of a dynastic connection to the previous well-established dynasty, the Isaurians, and thus married the last living offspring of the Isaurian line, Euphrosyne. Herlong remarked that in this period it was mostly relatives by blood or in law that accomplished successful coups d'état against ruling emperors, intimating that kinship provided personal access to the emperor, which in turn was of primary significance in achieving and exercising political power in Byzantium, which on the other hand also lead to the phenomenon that emperors in the 8-10th centuries were wary to involve many of their relatives in the running of the imperial administration.[1] Women were also important links at the level of the military elite, even if the anecdote about the parallel marriages of the two daughters of Bardanios Turkos to two successive emperors is not based on actual historical events. Clearly Michael Rhangabe, Leo the Armenian, Michael the Amorian, and Theophilos married women who were daughters of other important military leaders or officials forging important alliances through marriages, and after the birth of children, through god-parenthood. Thus, wives for emperors in office were selected either because of their ability to link the current ruler to the lineage of the previous dynasty (e.g. Theophano for Staurakios and Euphrosyne for Michael II), or because they created a connection between the emperor and a powerful general (e.g. Theodora and Theophilos).[2] The other women, who became empresses in this period married their husbands before they became emperors, yet their marriages also appear to have been forged in order to create further links between leading members of the bureaucracy and military.

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[1] Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717-959" , pp. 23-24.

[2] A daughter of Michael II and his first wife, Thecla was reported to have been married to Theophobos, a powerful general and protégé of the emperor. See ibid., p. 66.

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Selected Conference Presentations, Talks

2004 "Beautiful Bodies: Empresses in Byzantium," Annual Meeting of the Medieval Association of America, Seattle
2004 Session co-chair, *Female Relations: Imagery of Women and Girls in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*, 92nd Annual Conference of CAA, Seattle
2003 "Empresses of Medieval Byzantium," Humanities Lecture Series, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA
2002 "Symbolic Women of Byzantium: Images of Empresses of the 9-10th centuries," 90th Annual Conference of CAA, Philadelphia
2001 "Images of Theodora, Guardian of the Faith," 27th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, University of Notre Dame
2001 "Theophano: Empress and Saint of Byzantium," International Medieval Congress, International Medieval Institute, University of Leeds
2000 Gold Coinage of Irene from Constantinople (797-802)," 26th Annual Byzantine Studies Conference, Harvard University

Selected Honors, Awards

2003 Killian Excellence in Teaching Award, School of Art, Univ. of Washington
2001 Dissertation Fellow in the Society of Scholars, Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington
2001 Huckabay Teaching Fellowship, The Graduate School, Univ. of Washington
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1998 Fritz and Macfarlane Scholarship in the Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Washington
1997 Graduate Seminar of the American Numismatic Society, New York
1990 DAAD (German Academic Exchange) Scholarship, Department of Art History, Friedrich Alexander University, Erlangen, Germany
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Professional Affiliations

Archaeological Institute of America
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